A Short History

of

Comparative Literature

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES
TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY

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PREFACE

(From the preface to the third French edition, by M. Gréard, Member of the Academy of France.)

Two reflections, which at first sight seemingly contradictory are only so in appearance, suggest themselves from the perusal of this history of human thought from the earliest times to the beginning of the twentieth century. The first is that civilisation, regarded as a whole, is not the work of any one age. If certain races have contributed more effectually and with more distinction than others, the less famous have also borne their share of the work. In the mingling of races that results from conquest, whether by means of war or peace, the conquered nation, at its own time, exerts a reciprocal influence on its conqueror. In short, it is this constant interchange of ideas and beliefs across the ages that constitutes the only real and vital internationalism.

The other reflection, not less suggestive, is that in the general movement which leads the civilised world ever forward to a higher goal, every nationality retains its own vigorous life and its own idiosyncrasies. Orientals, Greeks, Romans, French, Saxons, Anglo-Saxons have severally played the part in the world-drama which only they could play. In the formation of human progress we discern many strata, and by studying them we are enabled to estimate the characteristics of the various peoples who laid them there.

The Græco-Roman civilisation we comprehend from history and from the fruitful influences it left behind it. In

Europe we possess a civilisation established in what were formerly called, by a now obsolete distinction, the old world and the new. Can we grasp the notion of a world-wide civilisation, founded on the mutual respect of different nations, and on the diffusion of those ideas and feelings which are at once its consequences, its consecration, and its guarantee?

Such is the splendid vision which is presented to our imagination by M. Loliée's *History of Comparative Literature*. To the task of painting this picture of human thought it was not sufficient to bring only the equipment of the critic skilled in grouping and epitomising literary masterpieces. It required further the sure hand of the true historian to disentangle the complex relationships; it required philosophic insight to recapture the spirit of the age.

The study of comparative literature—this best of means for promoting what we may term an international education, by diffusing throughout the world enlightened notions of tolerance, harmony, and peace—is now being pursued with enthusiasm both in Britain and in Germany. It is M. Loliée's distinction, to make use of the fine quotation from Ozanam with which he prefaces his work, that he is the first French scholar to attempt in its entirety "this vast design."

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CHAPTER I

Before history—First traces of thought—Egypt at the beginning of the ancient world—Many nurseries of culture appear in the dust of Chaldea—Co-existent civilisations of peoples and races along the Euphrates and Tigris—Far from Asia Minor—Among the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire—On the lofty plateaus of Central America—In the India of the Vedas.

At the present day we have arrived at the point of being able to build up scientifically the theory of the early ages.

As early as the beginning of the eighteenth century Jussieu founded comparative archæology, and since then anthropological discoveries have furnished an immense supplement to history. But linguistic paleontology remains to be created.

Modern science has been able to follow the earliest traces of humanity in light of the records of excavation. It has succeeded in showing us in times, whose distance is incalculable, beings similar to ourselves, living in company with huge animals of the cat species, making their way along abrupt rocks, wandering in forests, gliding away to the depths of caverns, communicating with each other by means of hoarse cries and indistinct monosyllables, or, when hungry, jostling one another in pursuit of the same prey; nevertheless they strove instinctively to free themselves from their natural brutality, using flint, hewing and polishing stone, carving the bones of animals, expending an immense effort in order to produce a coarse axe; having already taken a prodigious step by the discovery of the vital element, by the invention of the first torch. Such was the prelude, in short,

by a slow progress of centuries' duration, to that state of prehistoric advancement of which the bronze age and the first iron age are the culminating points.

On the other hand, it has not been granted to science to recognise as surely the absolutely primitive starting-point of the operations of the human intellect. Just as political history knows nothing of the Hindoos before Alexander, of the Medes before Cyaxares, of the Greeks before Danaos, so is intellectual history deprived of light concerning the most ancient forms of expressing thought, even when they are traced to their very source.

After so much inquiry and so many researches carried on among the world's archives, science cannot determine with certainty the original nucleus of those chosen tribes called upon to become the founders of great races. The imagination gropes in the night of primitive ages without hope of discerning a guiding clue which would lead it to the source of language and thought. We shall never know what were the first songs, the first laments, as yet resembling cries, which on human lips endeavoured to express the lispings of love, the vague notion of a higher life, the groan of pain or the mysterious dread of the supernatural.

There is no doubt that before the Semitic and Indo-European peoples entered upon the scene of history, mankind knew something of the most ancient civilisations and had acquired from them a long experience of the moral and practical problems of life. The knowledge, however, eludes our grasp amidst the obscurity of conjectures. At an indeterminable time, which the most cautious historical studies place indefinitely between the sixtieth and fortieth centuries before our era, appear, or rather seem to appear, the earliest groupings of human beings, little by little emerging from the torpid period of unconscious life. It is probable that henceforth the world was occupied by the three great races which still share it, and that in the space given over to the white race—Europe, the northern coast of Africa, Asia Minor, and

Further Asia—two progressive movements succeeded one another, the one starting from the Atlantic regions and characterised especially by the coming of the Iberians to Europe or of the Berbers to Africa, the other appearing from the East, bringing with it, by a series of immigrations, the elements of industries and beliefs.[1] It is maintained, in short, that the impact and mutual penetration of these contrary movements have left traces in the most ancient traditions of Greece and Italy.

In reality, Egypt and Chaldea stand out alone and sharply defined at the beginning of the ancient world, like two lonely planets moving in space in the heart of universal night. The remainder of humanity is, so to speak, of no account for us; they have passed away like shadows of which no traces remain. Far as learned hypotheses penetrate, it does not seem as if they could make their way back beyond these peoples, whose existence rests on positive facts of a kind quite different to those on which rests the conception, for example, of a prehistoric Asia of the Turanians and Kouschites.

§ 1.

The imagination experiences a startling surprise in passing from the sombre forests where primitive tribes vegetated, to the mysterious temples of Egypt, to the gorgeous civilisations of the East.

Very long before the poets assembled at the court of Thothmes III., or of Rameses II. (father of the Pharaoh mentioned in Exodus), had attuned their songs to the glorification of the exploits of their masters, "son of the sun," "son of Ammon," "lords of two diadems," artists and authors had existed in Egypt. From the period of Memphis, from the third, fourth and fifth dynasties on, hieroglyphic texts abounded, revealing amidst popular superstitions and sacerdotal mysteries the indications of genuine philosophy, or handing down to future generations even the

[1] Cf. André Lefèvre, *Evolution Historique.*

smallest details of the public and private life of the people under the Pharaohs.

Towards the end of his life, when the moment was approaching for him to go to his last rest in the necropolis of Gizeh, a high functionary of the early period of the sixth dynasty desired that the title of which he was so proud should be inscribed on his tomb, namely, that of Governor of the House of Books. There existed, therefore, books at that time ; there was then a literature of sufficient extent to fill libraries, of sufficient importance for a high court official to be placed in charge of it.

Amongst the works, lost irremediably, some undoubtedly went back very far. They were perhaps anterior to the reign of Menes, founder of Memphis. There existed the *Book of the Dead*,[1] a strange ritual sacred in the eyes of all ; historical poems celebrating the sayings and doings of ancient kings ; treatises on positive and occult sciences ; novels, tales, love-poems also, perhaps analogous to those which have been handed down to us from a much later period,[2] and more especially religious writings. The Egyptian sacred books preceded by a very considerable period the *King* of the Chinese, the *Vedas* of the Brahmans, the *Zend-Avesta* of the Parsees.

§ 2.

In the north and east of Egypt, the primitive race of which belongs to the white peoples of Asia Minor, over the immense expanse of territory comprised between the Mediterranean,

[1] Many copies on papyrus have been found on mummies.

[2] Fragments more or less considerable of three collections composed during the second Theban period, towards the thirteenth century before our era, have revealed to our scholars the secrets of the loves of the Egyptians, and remains of analogous lyrical pieces have been discovered even on funeral monuments. They differ but little in their main idea—their inspiration being the very heart of man—from those which the Arabs subsequently collected ; and in the forms of expression or composition of certain of these songs, an eminent egyptologist, M. Maspero, thinks he recognises the type of the Italian *stornelli*.

the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Caspian, and the waters which wash the southern shores of this continent, was a great and confused blending of nations of various origin. Some remained fixed to the soil where their ancestors lived ; others had come for the most part from the steppes of Northern Asia in search of a kindlier climate. They held the vast territory of Chaldea in common. Certain of these wandering tribes occasionally constituted a nation. The Akkads—a people discovered but yesterday, who cannot be connected either by language or religious ideas with any known family—the Akkads and the Sumers, or Sumerians, revealed a high state of advancement. When they arrived in the region of the Lower Euphrates they possessed a writing (a series of signs which are considered a simplification of hieroglyphics), the principles of legislation, a highly evolved religion. And their industrial superiority feared no rivals. They knew how to build and fortify towns, to forge bronze and probably iron, to build chariots, to weave wool, to erect statues and to produce bas-reliefs. One of the wonders of contemporary scholarship has been that of succeeding in deciphering one of these bas-reliefs—the column of E-Anna-Dov—the valuable discovery of M. de Sarzec, now at the Louvre ; for in addition to the tracing out of the physiognomy of one of their chiefs—a local chief, Gudea —research has been able to reconstruct the language, some four or five thousand years old,[1] which served the inhabitants of Ur and of Sirpula for the exchange of their thoughts

[1] The Assyrian inscriptions, the so-called Tablets of New York, of which we shall speak later, by the presence of several Semitic words seem to show that before the year 4,500 the Semites had exercised a certain influence on the Sumerians. The ascendancy acquired by the Semite king, Urukagina, would afford another proof of this, and it is thence concluded that the Semitic immigration into Babylon must go back as far as the fiftieth century. Now, as Dr. Latouche-Tréville remarks, it is proved that they were the sole masters of the country for a period which, according to the best calculations, cannot have been less than a thousand years. Sumerian history and civilisation would then have begun about six thousand years before Christ.

and for the drawing up of the first pages of history on the walls of their monuments.

From about the year 4,500 before our era (others fix the date as still further back) to the year 2,000, when they disappear completely, overwhelmed by the Semitic invasion and conquest, the peoples of Sumer and Akkad lived near the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris, quite distinct from the others. In type and in language they were different from the other peoples with aquiline noses and bushy beards, which were established around them (Cossians, Cissians, Kouschites of the Tigris, Aramæans of the Euphrates), and from the nomads of the desert. They left behind them, among those who replaced them, Assyrians, Phœnicians, or Jews, an abundant and prolific written tradition. The Jews in particular, who much later succeeded them, were greatly indebted to them. The expression of ideas or images and the poetical figures that have been regarded for centuries as purely Biblical, and which extorted homage for the inspired word of the Hebrews, and even for the very characteristics of the style, such as the repetition of the identical idea in other words in the same sentence—these are now shown to be of purely Akkadian origin by the latest researches of epigraphical science. In the Psalms attributed to David we find the formulæ of the ancient race of Akkad, and we hear an echo of its prayers.[1]

§ 3.

Another people co-existed with this one, unlike in origin, in temperament, and in genius. The language spoken by them was a Semitic dialect. At a very early date they had founded settlements on the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Persian Gulf. They were destined to form in the future the preponderating element of the Chaldean population, to which they brought their faith, their rites and observances, up till

[1] Ledrain. Cf. Schrader, *Die Hœllenfahrt der Istar, nebst Proben assyrischen Lyrik.* Giessen : T. Ricker.

then unknown to the early rulers of the country. As to the nature of this religion, full of invocations, occult formulæ, and mysterious hymns which sprang from the blending of old and new ideas, the *Book of Evil Spirits*, fragments of which have come down to us, remains as a singular testimony for modern science.

Three thousand years before the birth of Terah's son,[1] tablets had been covered with cuneiform inscriptions, which permit modern science to draw up the chronological list of the Babylonian kings for seventy centuries, and which testify that in this part of the world civilisation had attained its apogee at a period anterior to the Christian epoch by some fifty centuries.[2]

However, the races and peoples scattered along the Euphrates and Tigris blended and amalgamated whilst living side by side. In course of time they had lost all memory of their former immigrations; they became accustomed to believe they had never known any other land than Chaldea. Then they built up for themselves a sort of mythical history, and these fables were taught in books. Those of their priests most famous for learning or most highly gifted with imagination therein related the miraculous episodes of the genesis of the world;[3] the growth of the first families, then the ingratitude of mankind when it had become corrupt and evil; the anger of Baal, the All-powerful, having sworn in his anger to destroy what he had created; the cataclysm of the deluge, the rainbow of the covenant, the

[1] Abraham and the patriarch Terah, his father, were born in the land of Ur (to-day Mugheir), in Chaldea, whence they went to Canaan.

[2] These bricks or cylinders were discovered in 1900 by Mr. E. A. Hoffmann, Principal of the Theological Seminary of New York, and were deciphered by the Rev. Hugo Radan.

[3] Modern erudition has found in the comparison of the Babylonian myths with the first chapters of the Biblical Genesis the subject of most engrossing studies, since the English scholar, George Smith, discovered the history of the Creation inscribed in detail on the Assyrian tablets of the library of Assurbanipal at Nineveh.

confusion of tongues, and the foundation of the first Chaldean dynasty after the reign of the gods and giants.

One of the kings was called Shargina, the first of that name. He was a conquering and a civilising prince, had increased his own authority, founded cities, and established the preponderance of the Semitic races throughout Chaldea. At the same time he prided himself on protecting learning. He collected at Uruk (the Orchas of the ancients, the Orekh of the Bible, the Warkah of modern times) an important library, for which reason it received the name of the City of Books. At his instigation zealous workers had gathered thither from all parts ancient books containing the traditions of the priesthood; others busied themselves in translating them, in writing a commentary in Semitic language, and in increasing their number by new books on religion, astronomy, grammar, and legislation—a remarkable effort if it is a question of studying the human mind in history, seeing the resources of execution were so limited and the means of preservation of the works so insufficient. Arranged and transcribed with considerable difficulty on tablets of terra-cotta, copied fifteen centuries later at the command of an Assyrian prince, some of these products of ancient Babylonian literature still form to-day in their fragmentary state one of the most precious possessions of the British Museum.[1] No less precious would seem the simple bricks, a relic of the most ancient writing, which, discovered but lately in the ruins of Telsefr (in southern Babylonia), where the Biblical town of Ellasar was situated, have proved by the record of a private correspondence the great historic fact of the intellectual predominance of Babylonia over the Oriental world.[2]

[1] *See* G. Smith, *History of Babylonia* (1877); Tiele, *De vrucht der assyriologie door de vergelykende Geschiedenis der Godsdienaten*, 1877; and the works of Rawlinson, Oppert, J. Halevy, Hommel, Norris, Guyard, Loisy, Reisner, Koldewey, etc.

[2] Those ideas, which must date back to the period of Khammurabi or of Amraphal, and which are in the form of a series of letters and contracts

Moreover, there were other homes of culture scattered about Asia Minor, where, amidst an astonishing confusion of legends and faiths, all races of the world had met together; whither, much later, under the guidance of the legendary Thaddeus, then of Abraham, leader of a powerful and cultivated people, the wandering tribes of the Hebrews were destined to come and found for themselves a fatherland.

East of the Tigris, and bordered by the Semites, the Assyrians, Turanians, and Kouschites, the powerful empire of Elam was evolved. Great cities sprang up, and Susa, the capital, rose proudly at the confluence of the two arms of the Khoaspes. Towards the year 2,300 B.C. one of the kings of Elam, Kudour-Kakhuntes, made a descent into the plains of the Euphrates, and, capturing the cities from Uruk to Babylon, he carried off the images of the Chaldean gods in triumph to the temples of Susa.[1] In the heart of this Biblical Elam, and freed from Semitic influence, an ancient civilisation flourished which had in no way awaited that of Chaldea, in order to spring into existence.

And further it was on the shores of the Jordan, or centred round Hebron, that the mysterious Khittis[2] existed, sprung probably from one of the races which peopled the Caucasus. In like manner they had a prosperous industry, and a system of hieroglyphic writing, quite different, however, from the Egyptian system, and which as yet remains undecipherable; finally they possessed a literature. Long after their establishment in these lands, where they were destined frequently to come into hostile contact with the Egyptians, the Assyrians and the kings of Urati, one of their chiefs, Khitisar,[3] took

prove that about 2,450 years before our era there already existed a mode of writing in current use, not only used by kings to give instructions to their subordinates, but also by persons of high if not royal birth to hold communication concerning all that dealt with their private interests and to make mutual arrangements. The discovery is due to Dr. Wallis Budge, curator of the Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities at the British Museum.

[1] The history of Susa will be identified completely with that of Persia later on. [2] Or Hittites, Heteans, Khetas. [3] Under Rameses II.

with him to the war a historiographer to write down his deeds of valour.

§ 4.

Such were the uncertain beginnings of the civilisation of the Oriental world before the mingling of peoples (Egyptians, Phœnicians, Phrygians, Assyrians) which precedes the Persian domination.

Far from these nations and without any communication with them, the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire and those of the banks of the Ganges were progressing in unequal degrees; perhaps also the unknown populations which, on the lofty plateaux of Central America, were preparing a heritage of semi-barbaric civilisations for the Aztecs and the Quichvas.[1]

At the time when the two groups, Egyptian and Chaldean, situated at the end of the Delta and the far limit of the Persian Gulf were inaugurating the intellectual life of the Old World, the ancestors of the Chinese, the tribal groups scattered along the Hoang-ho and the immense Blue River, accomplished the same work of initiation on their own account in the regions of the distant Orient.

Two thousand years before the birth of Moses, twenty centuries before this theocratic leader of some 600,000 cruel and idolatrous nomads appeared, China alone filled the rôle which had been allotted in Asia to the peoples of the Nile and Euphrates.[2]

Hampered by the fetich worship of traditions which begin with the legendary Fou-hi, China appeared henceforth like a second human race, springing up unknown to the other. At a period extremely remote, but still near to that when the "Hundred Families," so-called "Black-haired," had scarcely left their cradle on the Kuen-Lun Mountains to found the vast Central Empire and to drive before them

[1] *See* Ch. Letourneau, *Psychologie ethnique*, Bibliothèque des Sciences contemporaines.

[2] André Lefèvre, *L'Evolution historique*.

the Thibet peoples (Miao-Tseu), Tsang-Ki invented the Chinese characters.

The earliest comers, whose wandering hordes were the stock which produced the immense increase in population, had sprung from a rough and savage condition ; they had only learnt the use of fire quite late ; and, like the Australians or Bushmen, lived on roots and insects.[1] They busied themselves with the cultivation of the soil, grew accustomed in successive generations to the conditions of a well-ordered existence—to a sort of regular social discipline, whence sprang the national type ; and this type, this second nature, varied henceforth but little throughout the centuries and remained the characteristic expression of the Chinese race. A considerable civilisation had sprung up of itself in the very heart of the Mongolian region.

At the beginning of their history—very rich in promises, many of which, alas, never went further than a momentary accomplishment—the Chinese were distinguished by a mind both methodical and inventive, by an intelligence which readily grasped everything requisite for providing the necessaries and the luxuries of life.

They created an art, a literature, a commerce ; then, judging that having progressed so far, they were sufficiently well provided and furnished for successive generations, that they needed no longer to change, develop, or progress, they consecrated the results arrived at with holy rites, prohibited further innovations, and remained, as they still do, the slaves of their brilliant past when they had the pre-eminence of all other races.

Chinese literature possessed inscriptions and books when other nations, though enlightened, were forced to commit their laws and legends to memory only.

But the most brilliant and most extensive home of Oriental civilisation was India—ancient India, whose early history begins with the establishment of the Dravidians.

[1] Cf. Prichard, *Histoire Naturelle*, l'homme primitif, vol. i. p. 309 ; Ch. Letourneau, *La Psychologie ethnique*, 1902.

CHAPTER II

The oldest testimonies of Indian genius—Asia and Europe compared—The development of religious and lyric poetry in Sanskrit literature—The Vedas—Historical times—Migrations of the Aryans across the world—Europe—Establishment of the Greeks.

"WHOSOEVER," says a modern writer, "meditates to-day on the origin of science, religion, and art, no longer stays at Athens or Jerusalem, but goes back to Egypt or India." In spite of the terrible uncertainty of actual dates in the history of the ancient world, we might say that from the day when the Aryan genius became conscious of its strength up to nearly our own times, it must have had at least thirty-five centuries for its uninterrupted development. Before the Aryan invasions of India the Dravidians, a powerful people from the neighbourhood of the Altai Mountains, had held sway in the southern part of the peninsula of Hindostan, and had proved superior to neighbouring nations in industrial arts as well as in the qualities of its language. A considerable time before they felt the modifying influence of Sanskrit this people had used the harmonious idiom which has been called the Italian of India, namely Telugu, in which it is difficult to give expression to ideas and sentiments, but easy to render the finest shades of physical impressions, and which possesses to-day among the descendants of the Dravidians in Mysore and on the Coromandel coast the most abundant literature of Southern India in songs, tales, and proverbs. Thus from one extremity of the

Asiatic continent to the other similar ideas and institutions were produced, without there being any original connection to explain this resemblance, other than the eternal sameness of human nature.

Long before the dolmens of the Stone Age had been erected in our chilly regions, the men of Egypt and Asia had been in possession of useful or precious metals, and enjoyed the advantages which the products of civilisation contribute to material life.

But at the same time there were whole nations which, separated by vast distances and ignorant of each other's existence, lived for interminable centuries in a state of abject barbarism, and survived to nearly modern times without arts, without written language, whilst chosen tribes, born under more fortunate conditions, advanced with rapid strides to attain an advanced state of civilisation.

§ 1.

If it is true that Nature is the primary and inexhaustible source of inspiration, spontaneous poetry must, so to speak, spring from the very soil of India.

What terrible and magnificent sights likely to strike simple imaginations are revealed in these climates! There all is violence, exuberance, intensity; good and evil, the creative fluid and the destructive power, the picturesque and horrible, a vegetation of wonderful luxuriance, and terrible storms, fine rivers and untameable torrents, burning deserts and pestilential marshes, vast plains of monotonous uniformity and mountains of gigantic proportions, horizons of blinding light, and black typhoons, the elements of life and death! What mysterious horror must not the Aryan have experienced when, as he prostrated himself, he felt the deadly sweep of the tempest pass over him like the breath of some grim divinity[1] wrecking the vessels, shaking the earth, ruining

[1] Marius Fontane.

houses, destroying crops, and uprooting whole forests! What religious emotion must he not have undergone when he raised his eyes to the limpid heavens, or when he let his gaze rest on the fertile valleys lit up by the smile of perpetual spring!

In this cradle of races and of religions Nature crushed man, feeble and unarmed, in her might. He was bowed down with this fatal domination. He both adored and feared it. From the idealisation of physical powers sprang the poetry of the Aryans. On the summits bathed in the morning light of those early days appeared symbolism and prayer. Unconsciously the Aryans endowed natural phenomena with passion and will, and these in turn daily inspired them with fear, astonishment, gratitude, or admiration. They saw in the stars, light, darkness, clouds, thunder, rain and wind an active spiritual influence. Each of the natural forces was in turn personified; they were incarnated in some exceptional type, some hero. Then the ideal grew and was ennobled; the superior being became a god; hymns came into existence.

The Aryans generally spoke an ancient Prâkrit; it was the common language of all. Scholars and chosen people who were visited by the *mens divinior* preferred to this vulgar idiom a nobler language to clothe their conceptions, a sacred and also legal language, namely Sanskrit. At a date so remote that one cannot trace it, amidst the darkness which obscures the literary chronology of India, more than three hundred poets combined their mystic writings in order to form a single extensive and profound work—the *Vedas*. They collected in the *Rig-Veda* (the oldest embodiment of Aryan thoughts and words) a number of traditions and symbols destined never to perish, but to pass by constant repetition from generation to generation till the distant day when they were to be written down on palm-leaves. Without knowing it, they built up a work of infinite value, of inexhaustible fertility, although poor from the artistic point

of view, wherein modern science thinks it has rediscovered everything; the germ of the complete religious development of India, the key of comparative mythology, the foundation of a very rich literature, the common source of the faiths of poetry, if not the dialects[1]—in a word, of a very considerable part of the civilisation of the Indo-European group. For such is indeed the value,[2] the immense, exact and positive value of the Vedic poems.

From the times of the Vedas the Hindoos, limited to the country of the Five Rivers (Punjâb) and to the mountains of Kabul, knew little more than the care of herds and the cultivation of fields. A purely religious poetry, grave and serene, corresponded to this patriarchal mode of life. It was sufficient for the aspirations of simple and peace-loving intelligences.

[1] The chief interest of Sanskrit literature and its principal use are philological. From the time when it was first possible to determine the principle of the common origin of Indo-European tongues, etymological science was led to the real foundation of comparative philology. People learnt at last to substitute simple principles founded on the essential analogies of articulated sounds and on grammatical structure for vague conjectures suggested by the exterior world. However, one must make an important reservation here. The idea existed that ancient India was to be credited with being the cradle of Western languages. In reality Sanskrit—that is to say Vedic, Celtic, Germanic, Slav, Lithuanian, are all by the same right, forms or daughter-tongues of one mother-language, now extinct, carried to different countries and there developed by different races or tribes which had been more or less united among themselves through a common culture, in one and the same vast region. The respective development of these idioms is independent.

The idiom of the Vedas appearing to resemble the supposed mother-tongue more closely, it was quite natural to look to the hymns for an echo of the most ancient thoughts common to the groups called Aryan or Indo-European.

[2] This is the opinion of the most reliable authorities on Indian archæology. Adolphe Regnier writes: "If we compare the literary monuments of Greece and Rome with the lyrical songs which bear the titles *Agastya*, *Vasishtha*, *Viçvamithra*, etc., they are like palaces in comparison with hovels, like the temples of the age of Augustus as contrasted with the sanctuaries of Numa." (Bopp, Benfey, Barthélemy, Saint-Hilaire, Desgranges, Adolphe Regnier, Bergaigne.)

§ 2.

Nevertheless, individuals and families multiplied greatly. The human wave grew larger and larger, pressed outwards and finally overflowed. The time came when the land they occupied appeared too small to the inhabitants of Aryavarta. In order to extend their territory, from being shepherds and tillers of the soil they became warriors. When the Indo-Aryan race was desirous of penetrating further among the fertile valleys situated between the Indus and Ganges, it was not without encountering active resistance that it succeeded in settling its surplus population there. The combats between the aborigines and invaders were obstinate and of long duration.

It is war that creates heroism. Heroes and their deeds inspire poets. Their songs and tales brought about the great epic blossoming of ancient India. They related with all the ornament and the enchantment of fiction, the victorious march of the Brahman religion and ideas ; or else they described battles waged between the various races, eager to win religious or political supremacy, impatient to emigrate their surplus population ; for the irresistible pressure exercised by the density of their population caused them to settle continually large numbers of their people away from their central state and outside their path of conquest and their new country.

The Aryans and Eranians had, moreover, some time previously begun this gigantic work of migration, this steady flow of peoples towards the West, which was destined to carry them to the extreme limits of ancient Europe, where many diverse races succeeded each other before the final coming of the Græco-Latins, the Celts, the Teutons and Slavs.

Many learned pens of to-day have traced the geographical curves of their itinerary, and have endeavoured to follow out the wanderings of innumerable tribes which

mutually allied or inimical became in the end perfect strangers to each other.

It is quite impossible to mark the ebb and flow of their wanderings. Historical imagination believes it can follow them as they pass with their huge numbers along so many intersecting routes. The Oriental Aryans very early made their way toward the district east of the Indus, and became later the Hindoos; in Bactria, Afghanistan, Persia, Armenia, and Media they became the Eranians. The others, the Western Aryans, strengthening and arming themselves to withstand the perils of their journey, move in various directions to occupy the European countries. Hellenes and Italiots side by side make their way towards the Lower Danube, and separate at the Julian Alps; the former proceed along the Pindus, the latter along the Apennines; to the north of the former, going from the Danube to the Rhine, are the Celts; between the Carpathians and Baltic, the Teutons; further back, between the Caspian Sea and the Vistula, the Slavs, on whose borders, towards the Dvina, dwell the Lithuanians.

Each of these families contained within it the elements of modern nations, condemned for the most part to a very obscure and laborious process of evolution. But one among them had been selected for a special purpose. This wandering tribe was led by providence to the Hellenic shores, and brought with them the civilisation, the language, the mythology, and the faith of "Hendoo."[1]

[1] It was the Persians who called the Aryavarta Hendoo. The Assyrians and Hellenes copied this name. The Aryans themselves named their country "Djamboud-Vipa"—that is to say, "Isle of Djamboud," a sacred tree, or Soudarcana, which signifies "beautiful to behold," or, again, Bharatavarscha, which means "fertile land." (Cf. Marius Fontane, *Histoire Universelle*, vol. i.)

CHAPTER III

Greece before the Greeks—Half-fabulous origins of the Hellenic civilisation—Times of the minstrels—The Homeric period—The *Iliad* and the Rhapsodists.

§ 1.

When still semi-barbaric, the Greeks, or rather the Yavanas, had arrived in successive waves from the East and from the North, armed only with pikes and bronze swords, but superior in language and intelligence to the peoples with whom they were to deal, yet quite ignorant of the plastic arts. Their ideas and conceptions were very primitive, for wrought stone or carved blocks of wood sufficed to produce for them the illusion of the noblest divinities. However, they found themselves in Asia Minor and later on Grecian soil, in contact with peoples far more advanced in the paths of civilisation.

These were Phrygians, Lydians, and others who had early felt the influence of the worship and arts of Assyria. Also the mysterious Pelasgians who occupied in the East the same position as the Iberians in the West, but they date later than the Iberians, who were the earliest civilised people of Europe. Strabo affirms that the Iberians, and chiefly the Turduli, inhabitants of Southern Spain, interested themselves in *belles-lettres* and possessed very ancient books of history, "poems in verse six thousand years old" as they declared. And Plato attributes to the Pelasgians, the builders of towns, palaces, fortifications, authors of words and inscriptions, the glory of having first restrained the power

of the Iberians. Athens boasted of having been the centre of the Pelasgian empire.

As they had made their way, the Greeks borrowed the elements of their alphabet from the Phœnicians, and at the same time they were indebted to them for the beginning of their commerce. They made acquaintance more slowly with the philosophy, medicine, painting and architecture of the Egyptians. The heavy style of Assyria taught them the first rudiments of statuary. They subsequently practised these arts in perfection. With no inheritance but a little tradition to help them, this wonderful Indo-Germanic people produced with their own efforts those works of art that have been through all ages the pride of nations and the joy of individuals.

Coming through Thrace and Asia Minor, these nomad tribes had stayed their course in the southern part of the narrow peninsula in the extreme east of Europe. The necessities of agriculture caused them to settle here. It was a very small territory, enclosed by a ring of mountains and with a deeply indented sea-coast. The arid and stony plains of the interior produced little more than poor harvests of wheat and barley. Olives and fig-trees and vines with twisted stems clothed the hillsides, where a marble quarry or a silver mine might perhaps be found.

In this restricted space, with these simple resources, this people developed who were, beneath an azure sky, destined to rule the world by their arts and ideas. A few seeds scattered on the surface of this barren soil has served to produce there the most abundant and richest intellectual harvest that has ever been gathered.

At first conceived as diverse emanations of universal energy,[1] the All-powerful, the great Pan, the humanised gods

[1] An elaborate doctrine corresponding to Orphic Pantheism is attached to each of these Greek divinities. The various gods invoked, viz. Apollo, Hades, Poseidon, Kronos, Hercules, Pan, Hephaistos, Adonis, Eros, Nemesis, the Nymphs, the Eumenides, the Moirai, etc., are only forms of

and goddesses were produced in large numbers from the marble quarry and carved in ideal resemblance of young and beautiful beings, full of life and strength ; and the treasures of the silver mine rewarded the masterpieces of artists whose monuments and statues were to be copied unceasingly for generations. Finally the activity of the Hellenes was destined to settle the shores of the Mediterranean with flourishing cities ; and their genius has given to human language a beauty that is still unsurpassed.

§ 2.

As with their ancestors in the Ganges Valley, it was through religious feeling that poetry was revealed to them. Like other European peoples, they had lost all memory of their relations with India, but their imagination had beautified the common stock of ideas and primitive beliefs. From symbols and the cult of the stars which had come to them from the East—a confused blending of the polytheism of the Hindoos and of the sorcery of the Celts—they had evolved those characteristic personifications of their cheerful mythology, in which a body and soul were attributed to the phenomena of Nature. They had thence built up a theogony in which, as in an ideal republic, each god has his special function and rôle, and in which order springs from a harmonious diversity.

The fear of the Divinity, gratitude for the benefits of the sun, the joy which accompanies the return of this life-giving heavenly body, the laments and sorrow which his disappearance causes, the instinctive aspirations of the soul towards the supernatural, provided the first themes of their verses.

But this was in an obscure and half fabulous period, very much earlier than written tradition ;[1] it was the period of

the universal divinity. (Alfred Maury, *Histoire des réligions de la Grèce*; Max Muller, *Science of Language*, p. 146.)

[1] In a learned treatise at the beginning of the twentieth century the celebrated German orientalist and mythographer, Max Muller, proved by examples drawn from Greek and Hindoo, from Finnish and Polynesian,

the minstrels, of Orpheus, Linus and Eumolpidus, the priestly age when poets held the position of educators. Their mission among mankind was to maintain the continuity of beliefs, and to uphold a certain discipline among men. They revealed to simple hearts the existence and attributes of the Divinity, as understood by them. They declared the moral code and combined the promulgation of the laws with the chords of the phorminx and lyre, and on solemn occasions they sang hymns, theogonies and mystic odes composed by themselves.

The minstrels were all poets also, and were called Olen Eumolpus, Philammon, Linus, Thamyris, Melampus, Pamphos, Amphion, Orpheus, and Musæus.[1] The majority came from Pieria, Thessaly, Bœotia and Attica. But their distinctness is lost in the mist of centuries. However, new generations succeed. States were founded, rival peoples waged war against each other, Greece conquered those who endeavoured to enslave it; heroes were born, and with them heroic poetry.

A youthful and warlike passion had aroused the courage of the Greeks, who were ambitious to try the strength of their arms against the walls of mighty Ilion. Thamyris the Thracian, Phemius, cited by Homer, Demodocus the Phæacian (the inspired poet whom the suitors of Penelope compelled to sing in their banquets), anticipated in their wonderful compositions the inventions of epic poetry. The hymn of Orphic myths disappeared to give place to the

that the primitive poems were first transmitted by oral tradition, long before the invention of writing.

[1] Among these Orpheus remains the most important of such legendary personages. In his name, long after him, was founded a theologico-philosophical system which had as basis the cult of Bacchus. Towards the middle of the sixth century appeared this theurgic and mystagogic sect, pretending to have direct and unbroken connection with the poet of Pieria, and to possess the authentic legacy of the master's doctrines. It has its poets such as Cercops and Onomacritus. The remains of this Orphic school are dispersed throughout the collection of hymns and poems bearing the name of Orpheus.

virile energy of their recitations. Having left the sanctuary, the poets began to mingle in the common life. They ceased to glorify gods, and included in their songs human beings worthy of being compared to them, and heroes, and also great political events.

Greece, till then divided into small states without cohesion, at length understood the necessity of joining its forces in one and the same enterprise, under the leadership of its kings. It was henceforward conscious of its own life and destinies, and the *Iliad* appeared as the first-fruits of the united Greek people.

§ 3.

The *Iliad*—that is to say Homer, the creator of the epic, was the result of a past, fruitful in poetical achievement. Who then was this venerated ancestor, who, for three thousand years has ruled like a god the summits of the slope "whence the beautiful descends to us"? Who was this man whose fatherland kings sought to ascertain by the voice of oracles, for the honour of being whose birthplace a dozen towns contested, and concerning whom the world is divided? After so much investigation, so much commentary and paraphrase, no accurate information is granted us with regard to his birthplace nor to the exact date when he appeared, nor to details of his life, nor the composition of his works and their mode of transmission. We may not ignore the fact that for thirty centuries Homeric creations have presided over the destinies of all literatures, that the aged Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Virgil, Tasso, Racine drew their inspiration from him successively; but the sources of this powerful river, whence it has been possible to derive an infinite number of streams, have not been discovered.

Were the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* the work of a single poet only, or did they not already form an epitome, an elaboration of several centuries according to the theory of Vico and

of Frederick Wolf ? All remains obscure with regard to the Homeric question, except that the poems are among the noblest works of human imagination, the magnificent monument of a civilisation, the archtype of the epic ; that the *Odyssey*, less heroic but more learned and elaborate than the Iliad, is the ideal of touching and beautiful simplicity, and that the combined poems seem to offer a selection of all kinds of beauty.

Attention was attracted by these masterpieces from the very beginning. Their merit was so readily recognised, that they were rapidly propagated throughout Ionia. For a long time rhapsodists went from town to town, from assembly to assembly, reciting Homeric episodes and accompanying them on the cithara. Whether they sang of Ulysses gliding over the threshold of his palace, revealing himself to the suitors of Penelope, and hurling at her feet the arms destined to avenge his honour ; whether they wished to represent the victorious exploits of Diomedes, or the anger of terrible Achilles falling upon Hector, or the misfortunes of Hecuba and Priam, the multitude listened to them, wrapt in astonishment, and the profound impression they excited in the audience, with the accessories of their imposing costume and pathetic declamation, filled them with pride. They imagined themselves invested with a share of royalty.

CHAPTER IV

Outside Greece—Voluntary ignorance of other countries as to its whereabouts—Consecutive development of the intellectual centres in India, Persia, Judæa, and Etruria, etc.—Hellenism and "barbarism"—Growth and decline of a unique literature—Displacement of Greek genius—Pergamos and Alexandria—Up to the year 540 before our era.

§ 1.

Intellectual effort was not confined entirely to Greece. In case we should forget to seek it in the far East, the mother-country of Confucius, where moral and political sciences grew up, and where, almost without the help of any external influence, the elements of a vast encyclopædic production were developed, India would occur afresh to men's minds. From the very earliest times there were for the consideration of scholars no less than six distinct philosophies, the developments of which comprised a literature of enormous bulk. Lyric in the *Vedas*, didactic in the *Munavaçastra*, its rich and early poetry had at least provided the material, if it had not finally achieved two monumental epics—the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*,[1] the one commemorating in heroic style the war of the two races which disputed in distant times the possession of the

[1] The *Mahabharata*, which contains 214,778 verses, is attributed in its final form to Vyasa; people are agreed in recognising in Valmiki the author of the composition of the *Ramayana*. The establishment of the Aryans brought the era of Brahman domination, which was in its turn very productive in religious, scientific, and didactic works.

Ganges Valley, the other celebrating alternatively in symbolic form, sacerdotal mysteries, religious systems, and national legends.

Ten centuries of poetic and warlike life are contained therein. Generations of poets had produced these gigantic epopees of the human and the divine, these pyramids of Sanskrit language, these remarkable works which have fascinated the modern mind. Little by little their enormous importance has been understood and their striking features grasped. Episodes and fragments, such as the beautiful story of *Nala and Damayanti*, complete in themselves, have been detached in order to appear to better advantage ; and certain daring spirits in Germany, such as Kosegarten, Holzmann, and especially Frederick Rückert, the brilliant translator of the Arab poet Hariri, have been inspired to enrich their own literature with happy imitations.

§ 2.

We have hitherto only touched very lightly upon India—forgotten by its Hellenic descendants. The Persians perhaps for several centuries repeated the hymns of *Yaçna* on the constant battle between the forces of good and evil (Ormuzd and Ahriman), and on the conversion of Ahriman and the final unity. If we believe the Mazdean legend, it was at a period beyond reach of the memory of man that the aged Zarathoustra [1] abolished the worship of idols and reinstated fire-worship, which great Djemschid had instituted, and brought men the true faith and taught them the Law.[2]

[1] Volney, following a text of Justinian, places Zoroaster in the reign of Ninus and Semiramis, nearly 2,000 years before our era ; others locate him at a much later date, and fix the coming of the celebrated reformer about the period of Hystaspes or Darius. Firdousi, on the other hand, favours the reign of Giustap, a variant of the name of Hystaspes, father of Darius.

[2] In India, Çakia-Mouni, divine reformer, does not really appear till the fifth or sixth century B.C. The Siamese reckon that Ardha Chiddhi, later on called Gotama or he who "guides the senses," and finally Çakia-Mouni

Less imaginative than the Hindoos, and having no need of a complicated mythology to assist them, the Persians arrived naturally at one of the highest religious conceptions, and their great poetry reflects a noble intellectuality.

§ 3.

Confined among wandering tribes of Arabs, Moabites, Idumeans, and Phœnicians, the children of Israel, at the period when Homeric Greece was flourishing, were elaborating their national monotheism, coloured with incoherent memories[1] in which modern exegesis has discovered the share contributed by Egypt, Assyria, and Persia. About the tenth century the hand of Moses, or other inspired prophet, traced the pages of Genesis. The Hebraic fable of Adam and Eve corresponded symbolically from a distant quarter of the globe with the Greek fable of Prometheus and Pandora. And the same hand inscribed at the beginning of the *Pentateuch* the first word of Jehovah creating the universe from nothing; it laid the foundations of this synthetic monument, the expression of an entire race, the Bible, where one day the complete development of Jewish literature was to be condensed. About the time when Greek epic bridged the gap between pure fiction and truth, the history of Israel began also to stand out from the obscurity of legend.

§ 4.

Homer, Moses, and Valmiki—these three names (if it is true they represent not fabulous but genuine personalities) are nearly contemporaneous. The Greeks regarded no one but Homer, and the father of their poetry had not instructed them

or "the penitent of Mouni," was born at Kapila, near Nepal, about 600 years before our era. In the case of the people of Cashmir the date is about 1332, whilst to the Chinese and Mongolians, and Japanese, his birth corresponds with the year 1000 B.C.

[1] André Lefèvre.

concerning the diversity of their race.[1] In the royal tombs of Egypt very ancient paintings were found representing the types of humanity known to the people of the Pharaohs. The contemporaries of these old dynasties were able to already understand the national types as expressed in colour and feature, and to compare the Asiatic and European with the Egyptian, who to them represented the highest type. The chosen sons of ancient Greece had not extended their curiosity so far. They were not ignorant of the fact that many foreign peoples possessed a civilisation far older than their own, but they disdained to explore either physically or mentally the extent or even the spirit of this culture.[2]

They saw in Persia a survival of the Chaldean civilisation, possessing some glorious tradition of learning, but generally ignorant and corrupt. They critically examined the *Avesta*, a simple collection of prayers, which can but have constituted a trifle saved from a great shipwreck. Amidst the interwoven myths they had no revelation of the hidden and pure sources. They had totally forgotten the affinities of race, of traditions and works, the identity of conceptions and intellectual habits which united them to the Aryan stock.

In vain had Homer spoken to them of Thebes, the capital of Thothmes and Rameses ; and in the *Odyssey* brought their chiefs, Menelaus and Ulysses, to the shores of the Delta ; Egypt had disappeared from their horizon, from the ninth and eighth centuries onward.[3] They boastfully pretended

[1] "In the *Iliad*," remarks Louis Ménard, "the Trojans are only marked by one feature of moral development—the polygamy of King Priam." This observation does not challenge, moreover, the great exactitude of Homer's geographical descriptions as hitherto proved by the evidence of the most recent works of modern erudition. (Cp. the works of Schliemann, of Evans, and more particularly *The Phœnicians and the Odyssey*, by Victor Bérard, vol. ii., 1903.)

[2] We must except their traveller Herodotus.

[3] The Carian Herodotus observes that the Persians, having neither temples nor altars, nor images, pitied the Greeks for their religion. "Xerxes," says a Parsee historian, "had such a hatred of idolatry that he destroyed all the temples and gods of Greece" (Dosathai Framje Karaka, *History of Parsis*).

to regard the rest of the world as superfluous. They had only one epithet, "barbarians," for all who were not partakers of their portion of sky or land.[1] The Phœnicians were "barbarians" whose *rôle* in ancient history was so great, the Phœnicians to whom they recognised their indebtedness for the alphabet and handwriting,[2] who taught their first philosophers, and who by commerce and the universal exchange of industries and arts founded European civilisation!

"Barbarians" were also the Aryans, their own ancestors, the intellectual forefathers of the races to which the direction of humanity had been entrusted.

"Barbarians," too, the Etruscans, whose establishment in Italy in the tenth century corresponded to the entrance of the Hellenes into Italy; "barbarian,"[3] that artistic people of Etruria, whose language is still unknown to us and whose literature has perished, but which has left such striking testimonies of its greatness in the underground tombs, or beneath the ruins of cities, and whose destiny it was to be the industrial and religious guardian of Rome from her beginning.[4] What need had they, they reflected, of other peoples? Were they not all-sufficing to themselves in every branch of art and thought, especially since a new era of democracy and liberty had increased their strength and genius?

[1] In the seventh century the Ionians were destined to enter the service of the Pharaohs of the 26th dynasty.

[2] It was the opinion of the ancients to credit them with the invention of the alphabet. Nevertheless, Tacitus gives the honour of it to the Egyptians, and therein is at one with modern science.

[3] We must admit, however, that the name *barbarian* did not exactly mean in the Greek mind that the peoples to whom they applied the term were lacking in industry, intellectual culture, or social organisation. It meant to them an inferior conception on the part of these strangers of political order and social life. The "barbarians," as they regarded them were uniformly slaves, whilst the inhabitants of the Greek city alone were citizens, free men.

[4] Were letters really communicated to the Latins by the Etruscans? Tacitus still affirms that Rome had received them in direct line from the Greeks, and this opinion is the one adopted by Kirchhoff and Mommsen in the debate which still wages on the point among scholars.

"To be held in high esteem among the Greeks" was with them the mainspring of noble actions, both at home and abroad; it was the highest recompense that a select people could desire among the stunted crowd of humanity.

The spirit of independence had demolished the rude palaces of their former chiefs or kings, monarchs almost without territory, petty princes of Argos and Orchomenos. Greece had become republican. It was henceforth able to realise its spirit in the people. Its maturity is within historical cognisance. The citizen, the free man, for the first time appears in human affairs.

The forms of literature were destined to change, just as political institutions had been modified. The spirit of epic poetry had grown weak. Nothing survived but memories, such as the *Shield of Hercules*, cyclic fragments. Little by little, without forgetting it, people free themselves from ancient tradition.

On the other hand, citizens feel more keenly the value of liberty. The national spirit develops in combats with distant enemies or nearest neighbours. To spread abroad the sentiments which thrill it, the flute lends its accents to the rhythm of verse, and replaces the lyre. The elegy in the hands of Callimachus, of Tyrtæus, of Terpander, of Philetas, of Solon, of Mimnermus, of Phocylides, and the Attic poets becomes in turn warlike, moral, and voluptuous, and follows the trace of its predecessors in the fruitful products of the great poets Archilochus, Alcæus, Simonides, and Sapho.

The very name of Sapho[1] enables us to realise that inspiration can ennoble and regulate the most passionate love. The rhythm palpitates, the verse trembles, the cadence is broken from time to time; it is passion overcome by its

[1] Henri Estienne in 1554 collected together, to unite them to an edition of Anacreon (born some hundred years after her), the trifling relics of this illustrious woman, who won the admiration of the Greeks in nearly every branch and in every form of lyric poetry, and who had enriched versification by the introduction of two new metres, the Saphic and Æolic.

own force. Although inferior, Erinna of Teos,[1] her pupil and friend, is destined to shine among the masters of song. Pindar soon after assumes his place, the noblest and most eloquent of all. No poet except Homer enjoyed among the ancients a reputation equal to his. His fame in the eyes of princes, of nobles and people, had almost a sacred character. His long life was marked by the brilliance of a continual triumph.

In the hands of the philosophers and annalists (such as Cadmus of Miletus, Hellanicus, Charom of Lampsacus) prose also strove to become a worthy vehicle of thought, moulding itself for the expression of the details of learning and for the charms of continuous narration.

Athens succeeds Ionia as the centre of culture. In her we recognise the school and the honour of all Greece. Strangers come from all quarters to study amidst the intellectual charms of Atticism, and to spread abroad this flower of taste and culture, whose beauty has never been surpassed. By signs of approaching dawn we see the age of Pericles appear.

The drama had powerfully seized hold of the imagination. Æschylus abandoned the "Cart of Thespis" and created tragedy. He was a solemn and lofty genius, old even in antiquity, and the powerful composer of theogonies of archaic divinities and ancient heroes; he had carried into the heart of the people the strong emotions which produce religious terror or exalted patriotism. His subjects are like epics with an unexpected mixture of grace and tenderness. Yesterday, tragedy was nothing more than the dithyrambic chorus accompanying the sacrifice of the animal consecrated to Dionysos with its songs and

[1] Unfortunately but very little of the delicate work of this "bee," as an unknown poet in the Anthology calls her, has survived. We have a name, a soft perfume, four verses of *The Distaff*, three epitaphs, of which one is very charming, and which she must have composed for young girl companions, shortly before she joined them herself in the tomb at the early age of nineteen. The ancients also used to boast the energetic talent of Telesilla, the fair warrior, comparing her to Alcæus and Tyrtæus.

figure-dances. Under the vigorous influence of the poet of Eleusis it reached the highest summits in a few short stages.

The Æschylean drama bore still some traces of epic enthusiasm.[1] The extreme simplicity of action, reducing itself to the approach or the removal of the initial catastrophe, the disproportionate length of the lyrical part, the predominance of the chorus over the other parts, the abrupt character of the style, finally, the form as a whole had retained a somewhat rough and primitive character. The origins of all subsequent drama, both pagan and modern, remained as yet somewhat indistinct and but little freed from the original dithyramb.

Sophocles in his wonderful mastery of the art included objects most closely allied with nature ; he gave his characters precise outlines and reduced them to human proportions. He captured the emotions of his audience by works which still exercise their power despite the lapse of time. He is placed between Æschylus, whose position he challenged with his first brilliant appearance, and Euripides, whose innovations and attempts he was in turn to scrutinise ; less ruled than the former by the shadows and terrors which enveloped ancient faiths, more religious than the latter, Sophocles raised tragedy to the height of moral perfection and then delivered it into the hands of Euripides. He, anticipating the moderns in his subtle analysis of passion, occupied himself more with arousing tender emotions and pity. He reduced heroes and princes to the level of human

[1] When English criticism sought, in march of intellectual history, for a poet with whom to associate Shakespeare and place in the same rank as regards energy, boldness, nobility and talent, it was forced to go back to Æschylus ; and the union of these two sovereign natures, separated by a gap of so many centuries and by a great difference of style, furnished it with the subject of comparisons no less interesting than instructive.

People have justly recognised, since Æschylean tragedy, the types of the principal kinds of drama, which have been developed subsequently throughout the ages : the drama of passion or internal fatality (Agamemnon) ; the drama of adventure or external fatality (Chœphorai) ; finally, philosophic and religious drama (Eumenides).

weakness and simplified the language of poetry, and took a happy medium tone between baseness and moral elevation; finally, in his free manner of humanising the gods, of dealing with the superstitions or foibles of our nature, he revealed himself as the emboldened forerunner of psychological drama —of which some of the moderns are so proud. At the same time, on the comic stage Aristophanes handled alike the beautiful and the ugly; the sublime and the trivial; the delicate and the obscene, with his brilliant wit. The favoured rival of Crates, Cratinos, Eupolis, and of Phrynicus, Aristophanes retains the advantage of being the only one of the great comic authors of ancient Greece whose works are now other than mere fragments.

§ 5.

The third age of Greek literature approaches. The Greek mind tries every branch and introduces order, proportion, rule and harmony into all subjects.

When Herodotus began to write, the Greek prose writers did not as yet know the value of sustained harmony, the appropriate arrangement of phrases and words, the secret of which Lysias was destined to discover, and which were to be further developed in the age of Pericles and Alexander. But the Homeric author of the *Histories* charms and holds us by an agreeable and telling style, by the very character of his language, which is a happy mixture of Attic and ancient Ionian, and by a natural cadence, closely resembling true poetry. A charming story-teller, naïve in his method of narration, but of such wisdom in observation and so fair and exact in his judgments, that he amuses while he instructs us. Nothing is more varied than his mode of recounting events; he never ceases to please: Herodotus opened up the way, he is the "Father of history." Thucydides and Xenophon were to follow in his steps, and transmit to future narrators imperishable

models. The former was an admirable painter of men and things, with a nobility, force and majesty almost worthy of tragedy; in the latter, immortally named "the Attic Bee," we note perfect clearness, an abandonment full of charm and an exquisite simplicity.

Women of free birth, especially foreigners exempted from the long domestic slavery imposed on female citizens by the customs and laws of Athens, have their share in the refinements of art and the exercises of the mind. Long before, history had told of the daughter of Pythagoras, named Theano, trained by her father's lessons according to the teachings of social science. Again Aspasia of Milos, called to the honour of marrying the most illustrious of the Greeks, admitted intimately to take part in the philosophical discussions of Anaxagoras, and the poetic readings of Sophocles and Euripides, or to the æsthetic demonstrations of Phidias, proves by her example and the serious grace of her discourses that feminine genius is not strange to the Muse.

In spheres of high intellectuality reign Plato and Aristotle. The sophists had recently attacked philosophy, disdaining or defaming it. From the confusion of systems, the incoherence of doctrines and hypotheses, they had concluded by doubting everything, in science as well as ethics. Melissus of Samos, Zeno of Elea, Protagoras of Abdera, Gorgias of Leontini, had succeeded in including in one denial the possibility of proving outside rhetoric the existence of life, motion, and practically anything else.[1] But Socrates had appeared, wisest and justest of men, to restore philosophy its true dignity. He had eagerly learned the lofty, spiritual teaching of Anaxagoras. When the philosopher of Clazomenæ, in the midst of the Agora, standing beneath the porch, his finger pointing to the stars, subordinated the ancient solar deities to the sole will of one supreme intelligence, youthful Socrates had listened and reflected. The true cause of the

[1] Cf. *Le Paradoxe*, by Frederick Loliée, 1 vol. in 16 mo, 1889.

world was revealed to him, no longer physical, but intellectual. He thence deduced the dominant law of all his philosophy and endeavoured immediately to put into words what he had conceived. The notion of "the good" was established as the main object of the intelligence.

Without any other help than the strength of their genius, his incomparable disciples, Plato, *Plato ætherens*, and Aristotle, whom Averroes entitled "the height of perfection," arrived at the most sublime conceptions by the light of reason; they understood mankind, nature, the eternal illusion of the divine, and long before it was a question of the Judæo-Christian monotheism, they conceived pure metaphysical deism, and finally sounded all the depths of knowledge and conscience. They well earned their title of teachers of the world. Moreover, in the burning region of lofty eloquence Demosthenes appears and takes his rank as the happy rival of Æschines, who comprised in his discourses the maximum of oratorical qualities. He developed under the teaching of Isæus, of Alcidamas, and Socrates; to himself alone is due the impetuosity and vehemence so characteristic of him.

§ 6.

Velleius has pointed out that the time which produced all these men was so short that there were only two of them who could not have seen and known each other. Perfection in all things is a point at which no long stay can be made, especially if a wonderful group of men attain such a summit; one must always descend from these heights.

One and the same epoch had seen the Old Comedy of Cratinus, of Aristophanes, of Eupolis; the Middle Comedy and the New Comedy of Menandros, Philemon, and Diphilos warded off the definitive ruin of the theatre for a century. The other branches of literature declined in an appreciable manner.

§ 7.

In reality Greek genius was displaced; it had left its ancient limits to gain in extent what it had lost in depth. Athens and Sparta, which led their forces to war against the foreigner, no longer dispute the hegemony with each other. The suzerainty of a semi-barbarous monarchy, Greek only in language, had been imposed upon the Peloponessus as well as on Attica. From the city of Minerva, which disappeared from the political world after the fall of Demetrius of Phalerum, the victorious spirit of Hellas was transported to Pergamos, the city of Æsculapius, and to Alexandria. Macedonian arms opened up for Hellenism the conquest of the East as far as the gates of India. After half a century of battles and anarchy the successors of Alexander reigned over ancient cities now pacified, and over new capitals. On the shores of the azure sea the queens of Asia Minor, Ephesus, Pergamos, Laodicæa, Antioch, Cæsarea, Hieropolis re-echo with the sound of festivities, declamation, and public spectacles. "The bronze-workers of Sicyone work their hard metal to represent on the Acropolis of Antioch to the eyes of posterity the wondrous fortune of the Seleucides. The terraces and friezes of Pergamos display in the light the victories of Attala, the sovereign beauty of Athene, the battle of Zeus against the Giants, the war of divine and human reason against the brutal forces of chaos."[1] And Egypt becomes a richer and more spacious Greece. We have now arrived at the height of the Alexandrian period.

This school has a bad but an undeservedly bad reputation. The innate grace of the Greek had become deadened, but had not disappeared.

After the death of the conqueror of Darius, those of his captains who had Africa in their charge founded cities in Egypt; letters found a welcome and had a refuge there.

[1] Gaston Deschamps. Cf. Alfred and Maurice Croiset, *Hist. de la littérature grecque*, vol. v., 1899.

Ptolemy Soter, Ptolemy Philadelphus, Ptolemy Euergetus welcomed poets, founded libraries, opened the Museum, and prepared a way for a period of fruitfulness, less brilliant, but of some beauty and importance too within their empire.

For several years there was a happy rivalry between Pergamos and Alexandria, and the schools of Rhodes and Tarsus to give evidence of culture. Ptolemy Philadelphus laid the foundation of the first great library in the part of the town known as Bruchium, adjoining his palace. No expense was too great which should serve to ornament and beautify it. He had the rarest and most curious books brought from every part of the world ; freeing a number of captives at his own cost. He lodged in a princely fashion for two and a half months sixty-two Jewish scholars, and loaded them with costly presents, and deemed it a light price to pay for the work which produced a translation from Hebrew into Greek of the Law of Moses and constituted the famous Septuagint Version.

Eager to enrich his Asiatic capital with the treasures of the mind, Eumenes, king of Pergamos, wished, like Philadelphus, to found a museum. Without possessing equal wealth, he was in no way inferior to the Lagides in munificence, when it was a matter of obtaining precious originals or simply of multiplying the number of copies. Already in Alexandria people began to fear this library would eclipse in importance that of the Egyptian kings. Ptolemy grew alarmed, and forbad the exportation of papyrus. Eumenes then invented parchment, and the collections destined later on to enrich the Serapion[1] of the rival city were very rapidly increased at Pergamos.

The books collected by the Egyptian kings, transcribed by poets and scholars whom they kept like birds in an aviary,

[1] Antony presented Cleopatra with Eumenes' library, which he brought from Pergamos. This was a consolation to Alexandria for the loss of that at Bruchium, which had been burnt, accidentally or designedly, during the siege of the city by Julius Cæsar.

gave rise to fresh studies. Physical and mathematical sciences were materially advanced by the works of Eratosthenes, who has been called a second Plato. Grammar and philology were greatly studied. Zenodotus, Aristophanes of Byzantium and his disciple, Aristarchus of Samothrace, vied with each other in expurgating texts, codifying the forms of speech, directing and guiding the love of letters almost to excess, yet advantageously. Thanks to their detailed labours, antiquity has become the object of sober admiration. "We really owe our Homer of to-day," says Ste. Beuve, "to Aristarchus."

Moreover, these times of punctilious criticism and a somewhat arid learning are entitled to honour in the field of artistic creation. Without speaking of gloomy Lycophron, the oracular author of *Alexander*, an author so obscure that compared with him all that expresses the idea of obscurity, mist and darkness, seems almost clear; without mentioning either the enormous output of plays, destined for Bacchic rites and revels, the number of which discouraged the zeal of such compilers as Suidas and Hesychius, were there not the elegies of Callimachus and the idylls of Theocritus?[1] The poems of Callimachus, according to the taste of the ancients, were more scholarly than inspired; those of Theocritus are still the delight of the poetic world.

The tender eclogue owes its existence to the Sicilian poet. In him arose the feeling for colour and the picturesque in nature which the illusion of mythological dress had veiled in more credulous times. Whilst Apollonius of Rhodes, collecting rather with elegance and harmony than with imagination, the lyrical and dramatic songs of ancient poets, led the hero of the Argonauts through distant seas, Theocritus, not moved by such great ambitions, was study-

[1] Meleager of Gadara, the ingenious collector of the first anthology and the most refined of all the artificial poets which sprang from the school of Anacreon, did not appear till two centuries later. "Greek beauty," says Paul de Saint-Victor, "smiles for the last time in Meleager."

ing, admiring, and reflecting the country in a vivid manner. In the pure crystal of his verses he reproduced sky and shore, without ever calling to his aid nymphs and dryads, for the incredulity of those days had banished them. He had fled great cities, filled, like our cities of to-day, with dust and tumult, in order to enjoy the delights of the rest-giving greensward, the bubbling springs and the bright horizons where fresh breezes play. Under the shadow of trees, beneath dense undergrowth, or on the bank of a gurgling stream, he noted down the songs of the goat-herds, and so produced pictures of infinite grace and value. As a model he has never been surpassed, for, as Amiel says, a landscape is to Theocritus an attitude of mind as well as a charming spectacle.

Next come the didactic writers, such as Aratus of Cilicia, who will one day be cited as a not unworthy forerunner of Virgil or Ovid.

These are the last echoes of Hellenic genius in possession of its liberty. Greece, so to speak, gathered its last harvest before passing its dominion into the hands of Rome.

§ 8.

Her heroic times were over, her fine creative imagination was only inspired by infrequent flashes. However, it sufficed for her to live on her artistic past, to keep her famous schools open, to let her sophists and orators speak, to subject to her own law the master who held her under the yoke of a proud conqueror. From the blending of these two races sprang an unforeseen power of rejuvenation, to the advantage of humanity.

Can we say that the Roman and Greek spirit had never been fused before this violent contact? There had existed, a long time before, trifling communications and exchanges between them. Scarcely a hundred years had passed after the foundation of Rome when the Corinthian Demaratus, expelled by the tyranny of a noble of the city, had come and

established himself at Tarquinii, creating a colony of artists teaching the rustic inhabitants of Latium in the art of painting vases, bringing up his children in the love of knowledge, and preparing his son Tarquin the Elder to rule in a worthy manner. Pythagoras was living in Italy, and laid at Crotona the foundations of his philosophical, mystical, and political fraternity at the time when Brutus was emancipating his country from slavery. And from the very beginning more than one idea capable of suggesting others must have circulated from the cities of Magna Græcia to the heart of rising Rome, trifling attempts, scarcely perceptible, which only the course of circumstances could establish. It is the normal progress of events and political communications between nations which give rise to the intellectual intercourse. Greeks and Romans drew nearer, until their contact became so intimate and their relations so direct as to seriously endanger the land of Miltiades and of Philopœmen. Towards the year 555 of Rome's history the conquerors of the world pretended to undertake a noble enterprise. They declared themselves loftily as the protectors of Greece against the ambitious designs of Philip of Macedon. Their legions arrived, they simulated for some time longer to grant the Achaians the shadow of liberty, and then confiscated the land they intended to protect. In the year 146 B.C. the sword of Mummius erased Greece from the list of the nations.

Too enfeebled to gain a victory by the force of arms, an immortal revenge awaited her in a region where neither force nor numbers count for anything. "Captive Greece" in her turn invaded Latin soil, and reigned in Italy in virtue of her arts and her thousand influences.

CHAPTER V

Before the Græco-Latin fusion—Beginning of their union—Early Latin poetry—Ruin of Punic civilisation—The times of Sylla—The "Age of Augustus"—The entire work of civilisation—Greatness and decline—Renaissance of philosophical studies.

§ 1.

For five or six centuries war and the thirst for conquest had alone guided Roman ambition. The Romans had shown but little taste for speculation, and the æsthetic sense was but little developed among them. Poets were born to them whom they ignored or despised. They had had popular orators, agitators in the forum, but the voice of the latter found no echo except in the sphere of political interests. Lofty eloquence and philosophy had made no progress worthy of note, or rather they had not revealed themselves before the events which brought about the dispersion of the last defenders of Greece in the provinces of Italy.

Forced to abandon the fatherland which they could no longer hope to save, numbering a thousand at least, but reduced, in their condition as conquered people, to take no further part in political affairs, these Achaians, chosen among the chief members of their cities, distinguished by their talents, turned to the cultivation of letters as to a final refuge.

One of them was the vigorous writer Polybius of Megalopolis. He began in Italy to collect materials for his great work, meaning to finish it on his return to Greece. Gifted in developing each event as regards its cause and

consequences, he gave to history a political and rational character hitherto unknown.

Very soon the examples and discourses of these men served as models, and provoked emulation from those whose coarser talent, rigid patriotism, political and warlike realism did not quite obscure the advantages of the intellectual life. A few years later it was the deputies of Athens—Carneades, Critolaus, Diogenes—whose oratorical talents attracted an eager crowd. To hear the enchanting voice of Carneades, his easy and rapid delivery, young men abandoned their pleasures and left their games ; they imbibed philosophy.

In vain was the opposition of Cato, who declaimed at all hours of the day against the credit in which foreigners were held, but who, punishing himself for having closed his eyes and mind to the seductions of Greek, ended his life learning the language ; in vain did severe censors endeavour to check this ardour ; in vain did the Senate frame a special law restricting the progress of studies likely to weaken courage. The impulse once given, did not cease.

One might, perhaps, have long regarded art and science as inferior, almost servile occupations, likely to enervate the soldier, if fashion and imitation had not intervened. But the bias once given, custom soon followed. The illustrious Romans vied with each other in adopting Greek names, such as Philo, Sophos, Hypræos. Latin genius struggled to set itself to schòol under the conquered people, and once having acquired the taste, would no longer wean itself from it. The decree dating from the consulate of Fannius, Strabo, and Marcus Valerius Messala did not prevent such a man as Scipio Æmilius from forming a friendship with such an one as Polybius or Panætius, any more than it hindered the elegant divinities of Athens from replacing the ancient Latin divinities, cold and rugged in the temples of Rome. How could primitive Etruscan, Sabine, Italic literature, formless and lacking in grace, prevail against the charm of Greece with its brilliant and imposing character ?

§ 2.

The birth of Latin literature had been tardy ; on the other hand it had a rapid growth and a sturdy youth. Between the first Punic War and the end of the Third gifted authors are by no means wanting. For instance, Livius Andronicus, the true founder of the literary language of the Romans ; Cneius Nævius, who first replaced coarse Saturnine verse by the iambic line ; Quintus Ennius, the vigorous Ennius, whom his contemporaries did not hesitate to call a Second Homer, *alter Homerus*. He sang the ruin of Carthage which fell the same day as Corinth, and shared the triumph of Scipio. Ennius was highly appreciated by both Cicero and Virgil. Subject to both Oscan and Greek influence which united in him with Roman talent, he wrote tragedies and comedies imitated or translated from Euripides and Menander, made his name as an epic poet with the eighteen books of his *Annals*, and by his satires showed himself the precursor of Lucilius. In his steps followed the tragic poet, Pacuvius ; Plautus, the people's favourite; Afranius, who was long considered the Menander of Rome ; Cecilius, a worthy predecessor of Terence, and Terence himself. From the author of *Andria* dates the birth of good taste among the Latins ; after having heard him they began to blush at the prodigious applause given to the coarseness of Attius and Pacuvius.

Thus the love of letters progressed rapidly enough. It succeeded in conquering the long-felt repugnance of Roman politics for the occupations of peace. Why had not this taste for things of the mind already become more widely and deeply ingrained in men's minds at the time when illustrious Carthage fell, never to rise again ? A conqueror less lacking in culture would have wished to save some vestiges of a civilisation so violently destroyed in the shock of battles, and consequently so completely effaced from the earth that the very ruins have perished.[1] A whole race like that which did

[1] The Arab peoples are supposed to have aided in this devastation of

not possess a Polybius nor even an Appianus born among it to write the history of its varied fortunes, would not have disappeared without leaving any other traces than its name, tombs, and a few shapeless columns, and the dust of marble mingled with sand from the seashore.

There was on this coast of Africa, facing Italy, Gaul, and Spain, a powerful nation laying claim to maritime empire. It had possessed the most numerous and best armed fleets known up till then. Its marvellous situation had made it the metropolis of the West. Rival peoples regarded it with envy. It was essentially different from Rome in language, custom, racial type, and origin. Carthage resembled Phœnicia ; Phœnicia, Judæa. With its mercantile genius, its customs marked both by opulence and barbarity, its temples and its superstitions, with the symbolism of its cruel worship including Moloch, the Devourer, as well as Tanit, the ascetic Venus, and mingling with the most horrible practices vague souvenirs concerning the origin of the gods of a profound and mysterious character. It was another world. If all these monuments and inscriptions had not been irrecoverably destroyed, what characteristic testimonies would have confirmed these numerous contrasts for the instruction of mankind and strengthened the proofs of historic tradition ! Or what documents might not have been added to the inheritance of Oriental thought ! But it was decreed that Greek ascendancy should take no share in the intellectual education of the Romans.

Punic and Roman Carthage to a great extent, owing to a habit they early acquired of appropriating ancient *débris* to the requirements of their own buildings. In the thirteenth century the Arab historian Edrisi mentions the removal of *débris* from Carthage as an abuse of long standing. In 1899 the discoveries made by Father Delathe (cp. *Le Musée Lavigerie de Carthage*, Paris, 1900), and especially the researches directed by M. Paul Gauckler have thrown unexpected light on Punic art and civilisation before the "Queen of the Seas" had been overthrown by the power of her implacable enemy. Nevertheless the majority of the discoveries exhumed from the soil of Byrsa belong to the second Carthage—Roman Carthage, for which, too, was literally accomplished the dictum of aged Cato, "*Delenda est Carthago.*"

This ascendancy increased. Philosophers were summoned from all parts of the peninsula to educate the young by their lessons or guide those citizens by their counsels, whose birth or election by the populace called them to take part in public affairs. Many distinguished orators dispute this ascendancy; each is eager to follow in the steps of Lysias, Hyperides, or Demosthenes. Crassus and Anthony bequeath the sceptre of eloquence to subtle Cotta and brilliant Hortensius. Such was the reputation of Hortensius, that the best actors of the day used to go to hear him on purpose to imitate his gesture and his style of declamation. The Scævolas now carry the elaboration of civil law to perfection. And Cicero, most eloquent of the sons of Romulus, begins to exercise his talent as a wonderful literary innovator. His early attempts were full of audacity and brilliance; in the midst of the silent terror which the memory of the proscriptions[1] kept alive, he had dared to undertake the defence of an oppressed man, Roscius, and the universal silence had only served to give further echo to his words. His existence is bound up with the chief events of Roman history, and he took a leading part, in spite of the fact that the weakness and inconsistency of his character often marred the greatness of his mind.

Above all, he desired the first rank in the domain of pure intellectuality. He is the prince of Latin literature owing to the number, diversity, importance, and purity of execution of his works. Tender emotion, exquisite delicacy, religious and grandiose solemnity, the power of pathos, all that is human finds a place in the marvellously expansive nature of Cicero.[2] Neither public successes nor the hardships of camp-life deadened this intellectual fervour. Sulla

[1] G. Boissier.

[2] The peculiar gift of Cicero was indeed an extraordinary mobility of impression, which enabled him to move rapidly from one state of mind to another, and having done so, to produce the most varied effects on others according to the impulse that his imagination or heart had received.

himself had written twenty-eight books of memoirs and otherwise contributed to the advancement of letters, by bringing to Rome the famous library of Apellicon, the Peripatetic philosopher. The inveterate enemy of satirists, independent writers, authors of lampoons, of all those who might recall the mere name of liberty to a sympathetic ear, did not hesitate to at least encourage discreet and peaceful studies. After Sulla came Lucullus.

In the pomp of a retreat covered with glory, thinking there was no better means of employing the leisure hours of private life than by applying the mind to extend its sphere of knowledge, the conqueror of Mithridates had had a magnificent edifice erected under his direction, a palace for books, the doors of which were open to all the world. Surrounding it completely were long walks, shady avenues, whither the Greeks resorted eagerly, delighted to abandon themselves to the joys of learned discourses, far from the turmoil of the city. Lucullus took part in their discussions, assisted in their debates, and did not conceal his preferences for the old Academy in the matter of philosophy, while his friend Cicero laboured actively to bring the new into favour. Such was Lucullus, as well versed in the arts of peace as of war, and who one day forming the plan of compiling a history, had even drawn lots to see if he should write in Greek or Latin, in prose or verse.

Nevertheless, this happy exterior, this fine appearance of intellectual tranquillity, which would seem to belong to an essentially calm, peaceful, and prosperous period, were but a deceptive and inexact picture, brilliant only on the surface. Other ambitions prompted men than to imitate Greece from an artistic point of view. If certain privileged people had conquered fortune by most audacious acts and could retire in complete repose to the joys of the *otium occupatum* of the scholar, nevertheless this was not the case with the majority of Romans, who had to act in their turn, carve themselves out a fortune, and play their part in the midst of

the unbridled violence of factions.[1] People like prudent Atticus[2] were rare, who could manage to remain honoured, rich, powerful in such terrible days as those of Sulla's proscriptions, when mere existence was a problem beset with difficulties. Corrupted early in life, and living without scruple or principle, attaching only a trifling value to the maintenance of their dignity, the youth of the period, such as Cœlius, Curio, and Dolabella, in the suite of ambitious nobles giving rein to their turbulent desires, would have been ill-chosen to incarnate the sentiment of pure literature and the disinterested love of study. Cæsar had a different end in view for Latin youth in the revolution he wished to accomplish. The Epicurean sect, introduced to Rome at the end of the Republic, subordinating everything to personal interest, had largely contributed to the mental and moral degeneracy. Conflicting passions and the pressure of events accomplished more than words or doctrines. Never did more complete anarchy put to the test the forces of a great people. From the Consulate of Cicero to the Social Wars, Rome never knew an hour of peace. What a succession of unheard-of vicissitudes were they which, in so brief a space of time, could make of one and the same man (Cicero) the rival of Catiline, the victim of Clodius, and the subject of Cæsar! While the legions continued to conquer the world and despoil the provinces, a dogged war continued within the very walls of the city with a view to conquering her herself. Generals hungry for power oppressed this people who had armed them with formidable authority. She was destined to fall to the lot of the stronger and cleverer party, that is to say to Cæsar.

The great troubles, the infinite agitations under which the

[1] Cf. the admirable work of Gaston Boissier, *Cicéron et ses amis.*

[2] This Atticus, whose boundless complaisance accommodated itself to every one, and who was able to remain on friendly terms with both Balbus and Theophanes, the confidants of Cæsar and Pompey, and visited Clodius and yet remained the best friend of Cicero, was one of the cleverest men in the world.

Republic perished, left a deep mark on some of the chief works of contemporary writers, such as those of Sallust, the insatiable extortioner, so ready to preach to others the merits of virtue and moderation, and of Lucretius above all, whose words at least did not deceive. A saddened disciple of the doctrines of Epicurus, witness of the grim agony of the Roman Republic, disillusioned as regards heaven and earth by the sight of terrible political and moral disorder,[1] and seeing no other refuge for independence of mind than in retirement within oneself, and in the placid tranquillity of the soul without hope or fear, Lucretius had produced his audacious philosophical poem *De Rerum Natura*. His original thought, his scepticism of the fabled gods, of auguries, and his enmity towards courtezans, contributed towards the overthrow of the old Roman world.

Liberty had now become but an empty word on the lips of a Cassius or a Brutus.

Moral deterioration was practically universal. Such a state of things, so terribly savouring of anarchy that it had become customary to win high position no longer by a money payment but by force of arms, could not go on longer without finally leading to a far-spread disgust. Worn out with fatigue amidst dissensions ever newly revived, by tumultuous crises in the public assembly, by those battles, closely resembling massacres,[2] which accompanied every election, men interested in politics at last turned away with disgust from what had formerly deeply interested them : the popular activity of the Forum, the inquiry in the full light of day into the charges and acclamations amidst the noise and

[1] "Imagine London," says Mommsen, "with the slave population of New Orleans, the police of Constantinople, the industry of modern Rome, and think of the political state of Paris in 1848, and you will have some notion of Republican Rome in its last moments."

[2] "The Tiber," says Cicero, speaking of one of these fights, "was filled with bodies of the citizens, the main sewers were also full, and people were forced to mop up with sponges the blood which flooded the Forum." (*Pro Scato*, 35.)

restlessness of the people. Many of them grew accustomed, little by little, to regard the Epicurean formula as a law of wisdom, which taught it was good to flee public office in order to spare oneself the trouble it involved. They set themselves to seek the charms of the inner life which they had hitherto undervalued, and solaced themselves, far from faction and violence, in occupations capable of affording them both repose and honour. The wisest and happiest took refuge in the culture of letters to console themselves for the misfortunes of the State.

Augustus appeared at the right time to establish order and—tyranny. The peace he gave to the world rendered the development of talent easy. He had risen to supreme power by a singular insight into life, combined with audacity and adroitness, an absence of scruples and a pitiless cruelty. He changed his line of conduct as soon as he had no one to fear, and we see him showering favours on all those whose gratitude, whilst making him forget the horror of his proscriptions, served to blind the universe.

§ 3.

The political dissensions, the struggles for pre-eminence between parties or classes, and the anarchy which resulted therefrom, no longer disturbed the city. Under the name of Empire, an organised dictatorship, without institutions or principle of government, but based upon an administrative form and fortified by laws, appeared to offer all guarantees for order and solidity. The Social War had died out from lack of support ; Italy and the provinces breathed again. The majesty of the Roman peace spread its benefits over the whole extent of this vast territory, where the entire work of civilisation was comprised, limited on the east by the Parthians and on the north by the Germans. The general tranquillity encouraged the development of science and arts.

It was not long since Cato, and especially Cicero, had obtained for philosophy the right of citizenship in Roman territory. It had above all gained by the fall of the republican *régime*. The political and moral world was transformed; old traditions had disappeared before a new order of things; other ideas were circulating; every one was groping, as Lucretius said, after the path of life. At the very time when Cæsar's power was dazzling all eyes, Epictetus, an obscure slave, poor and lame, had undertaken to show men the vanity of these conquests and the smallness which this supremacy possessed in the eyes of the wise. So when the age of Pericles had reached its highest expression of glory and wealth, Antisthenes, the first of the Cynics, had taken upon himself to mock at all the splendour of which Athens was so proud.

Philosophic thought did not only attract purely speculative minds, but those even who were then for various reasons in the public service. Augustus wrote a book to encourage the study of philosophy. Historians, poets, lawyers, writers on art likewise studied it. Labeo founded on this basis his deep judicial knowledge and the strength of his character. It was no less necessary to Vitruvius [1] than to Pollio or Titus Livy. Others spent all their time in the study of philosophy, it became their veritable profession. They trained pupils, imparted a severe and methodical instruction to a select circle, or occupied themselves with the moral direction of their acts and sentiments, for the highest good of their everyday life. Such were the two Sexti and the orator Papirius Fabianus, who has been compared, on account of his philosophic eloquence, to Bourdaloue. "People listened to him," says Seneca, "with respectful attention, but sometimes the audience, fascinated by his magnificent ideas, could not restrain their shouts of admiration."

The force of political eloquence, beneficial or injurious in its effects, requires an unconquered soil and develops best

[1] *Philosophia perficit architectum* (Vitruvius III.).

amidst noise, agitation, and discord, and was far less well adapted than philosophy to the passing from an estate of continual turmoil to that of a regular and peaceful government. It had lost its fire and strength in losing its independence; already Messala and Pollio had grown feeble among their contemporaries, like men of another age.

But poetry, which demands agreeable leisure, was enabled to attain a high standard in security and ease, and produced at this period some splendid work.

It is now that Virgil enriches his subjects, and celebrates rustic joys and the labours of the field, and being inspired by Theocritus, by Hesiod, or Lucretius, he enters the lists with Homer to furnish Rome with its immortal epic; Horace, under the patronage of Mæcenas, gives the Latin spirit its brilliance and wit, satire is no longer virulent and envenomed, and taste is refined by common sense and by good-tempered malice. His whole work is penetrated by philosophy. With his exquisite sincerity, his perfect freedom, Horace still remains, of all the poets of his kind, perhaps the one who best responds to the divine aspirations of our changeful and contradictory human nature.

The friend of Virgil, patron of letters, and himself gifted with a passionate imagination, Cornelius Gallus, and after him the sensible Tibullus spread abroad the charms of the boudoir in their elegies; Propertius, worthy successor of Catullus, sings, in verses full of fire—although a superabundance of mythology is mingled with his sighs—the troubles of the heart and the senses; and Ovid pushes still further than Tibullus the pleasing pastime, a certain witness of a too lax liberty of morals. Prose reaches its perfection in Titus Livy. The accounts, full of charm, of the great chronicler—if they do not escape the censure of historical criticism—have retained their merits of form unimpeached; his grand style, which sometimes approaches prolixity, may be compared to a river of milk.

§ 4.

"Every institution comes late, and lasts but a short time," says La Fontaine ; so it is in the creation of letters. The maturity of a literature is only a point of time. The language decays, minds become spent, and morals are corrupted. Political circumstances hasten the degeneration of Latin works.

This peace, apparently so well established, could not last ; it was, after all, only equality under the yoke. Nor could this universal favour of fortune, this triumph of all the elements of glory and prosperity, endure.

Famous pens have traced the rapid decline of Latin greatness and the causes which led up to it. The Empire sprang from anarchy. In its turn, carried to the worst excesses by the abominable tyranny of the successors of Augustus, by the boundless greed of the fiscal administration pressing on the provinces, and by the terribly low state of public morals generally, it hastened its own fall. Civil wars, which the hand of Augustus had checked, broke out again.

Foreign wars were marked by truces only. Literature suffered the reaction of this intermittent state of things. The epileptic Caligula, envious of all glory, proscribed the poet at the instigation of the patrician. Claudius, a learned imbecile, only knew how to deal with dice-players, freedmen, and fools. Nero, from vanity or predilection, claimed to restore the glory of the Latin Muses. Under Nero, indeed, "the baths, basilicas, and the plane-trees of Fronto re-echoed the cadenced voices of writers robed in purple, and with perfumed hair, who read aloud their elegies and pastoral poems. It is quite an academic life, with crowded benches, compliments, and applause, with people rushing breathlessly from one recitation to another, who having hastily embraced one poet, hurry and cry out to his fellow-poet, '*Pulchre, bene, recte!*' Under the benign influence of the imperial sun, and the showers of gold and laurels

which come from Mount Palatine, there springs up a gentle and tenderly nurtured poetry, fed on honey and reared in the hot-house of a cultured circle of auditors, in the sweet scent of spices, to the melody of the cithera, which impart a certain tone, to the pleasing sound of its own voice amidst the cadenced applause of faithful friends."[1] But how far removed are all these composers of hexameters and hendecasyllabic verses from the sober grandeur and suavity of Virgil! One of them, Lucan, preferred loud and declamatory tones to eloquence itself. At least, he stands out above his cold rivals by the relief and energy of his colours, by the life of his style and thought. Alas! Nero made him pay dearly for the brilliance of his precocious talents; Lucan had the doubtful honour of being a fortunate rival of Cæsar in a poetic contest. Condemned to silence for his literary successes, which were offensive to a tyrant and dabbler in letters, then to death for the crime of political conspiracy, involved in the cruel disgrace of his uncle, Seneca, Lucan disappeared from the scene in his twenty-seventh year, leaving the field free to Statius, Silius Italicus, and others. Capable of expressing delicate, touching, or warm feelings, always supple and easily moulded, but none the less prompt for this very reason to spoil the effect by artificiality, Statius, author of the *Sylvæ*, may be taken as the perfect type of decadent literature.

"A trivial poetry," says Plutarch, "brought in its train effeminate and corrupt music." The theatre had not recovered from its sterility. Seneca, it is true, had the tragedies represented on the stage which have come down to us bearing his name. Were they, perhaps, only the work of collaboration? We do not know. We therein see now and then a flash of Greek civilisation, but the eloquence is stiff, bombastic, and heavy. Moreover, literature daily disappears more and more from the stage. The lazy and brutal populace only come to see costly displays. Spectacles

[1] Champagny, *Les Césars*, vol. iv., fifth edition, p. 132.

were never more numerous ; never did intelligence have less authority. The circus opened in the morning, games were continued till far into the night. Another distraction which was indulged in to excess was horse-racing ; that was the chief delight. On the other hand, scenic representations failed to attract. Neither comedy nor tragedy were henceforth capable of drawing people to the theatre. *Mimi* and *Atellanæ* were still in favour owing to the licence which was their dominant characteristic, but bloody spectacles had quite another power of attraction for the Latin plebs. Lions were pitted against tigers, boars against boars, men against men. It was no question of producing poems or writing plays amidst the confusion of the arena. As for eloquence, it perished through forced emphasis and empty declamation ; sophistry, on the other hand, triumphed completely. Thought was abandoned for words, the conclusion for the syllogism.

The schools of rhetoric attracted all the studious and brilliant youth. But, confined in the narrowest of circles, oratorical art was reduced to subtle disputes and hair-splitting contests, and became finally only a clever juxtaposition of words.[1] With the Emperor Vespasian the teaching of rhetoric became a State function in the person of Quintilian, invested with the special mission of restoring good taste. Pliny the Younger was the best pupil of Quintilian, and, as such, showed better than any one to what a state letters had sunk.

Everywhere the enervating and deadening influence of the grammarians makes itself felt. The Forum exists no longer, nor the rostrum ; there were no more cases to be pleaded, no more resounding law-suits, in which the cause of humanity was fought out ; high eloquence, the force which guided the world, *regina rerum oratio*, has no opportunity to make itself felt ; no theatre where to appear in full light. People only speak in a prætorium before a few judges, half asleep ; a boundary wall, a gutter, are the subjects of these disputes.

[1] Cf. Gidel et Loliée, *Ecrivains et Littératures*, 1898. A. Colin.

The name of orator no longer exists, but is replaced by *patronus, causidicus.*

Philosophic speculation applied to sciences, which had produced such wonderful results—among the Greeks, in the case of Empedocles, Democritus, Aristotle, Pythagorus—failed visibly ; and Pliny the Elder, in spite of all his encyclopædic knowledge, when collecting tales, fancies, and superstitions for his *Natural History*, marks rather a relapse than an advance in positive knowledge.

Nevertheless, these defects and weaknesses, which arose from general causes, from conditions of state and society, did not check the rise of fine writers of other kinds. The history of letters has retained the memory of the advance which Petronius brought about in introducing into narrative poetry, in place of the gods and heroes of convention, the everyday figures of contemporary Roman life. It might by chance omit the author of the *Banquet of Trimalcion.* Nothing would justify it in forgetting to mention the progress of philosophic ideas which continued in spite of the general degradation of morals.

§ 5.

By a sort of necessary compensation to the generation which had the misfortune to be born under Caligula, to be educated under Claudius, and to come to maturity under odious Nero, Stoicism revived as if newly inspired ; and no longer was it the rugged Stoicism of Cleanthes and Chrysippus, wrapping itself at every turn in rhetoric, or bristling with witticisms and subtleties, but an attractive and persuasive Stoicism, appropriating the best attributes of eloquence to convince, console, or sustain. It became a teaching of terrible necessity under the tyranny of the Cæsars, for it gave a great force of endurance to the human soul, even if it did not allow it sufficient freedom of action. All that then remained among the citizens of Rome of pride

of birth or republican liberalism as a political party, of independence and dignity, as regards moral worth and individual conscience, was summed up in this form of speculative teaching, and protest revealed in idea as in the case of Seneca, in fact as in the case of Musonius Rufus, Thraseas, Lateranus.

Seneca was the most illustrious representative. He had grown up in surroundings where rhetoric and philosophy flourished. When very young he fled the crowd to listen to the noble discourses on morals of Papirius Fabianus. The words of Sotion the Pythagorean delighted him. He was first to arrive at the school of the Stoic Attalus, and, not content to leave after the others, he accompanied his teacher to enjoy his lessons still further.[1] He himself surpassed all. Little knowledge then within reach of men escaped him. With his profound experience of the human heart, his singular moral penetration, and the eloquent warmth of his proselytism, he exercised a remarkable influence. Destiny having determined he should meet with all the vicissitudes to which mortals are exposed, his books became the manuals of all who appreciated practical philosophy.

In view of modern enlightenment, Seneca has lost much of his credit and authority. In reading his austere work as that of a director of conscience which he wished to be, his eloquent lines on the duties of man to himself and his neighbour, remind us too much of the teacher of Cæsar, the lover of Agrippina, and the aspirant to the Empire ; the ambitious man in him spoils the moralist, the politician makes us suspect the thinker, although, according to definition, it has not been so regrettable that philosophy should for once govern the world.[2] Notwithstanding that, however, he managed to

[1] Seneca, *Letters*, 108, 3. Cf. Gaston Boissier, *La philosophie romaine, d'Auguste aux Antonins.*

[2] Trajan estimated that the five years during which Seneca was the chief minister of Nero were one of the happiest periods of the Empire (Aurelius Victor, *De Cæs.* x.).

deceive himself, delude others as to the sincerity of his sentiments, develop the beauties of Stoic doctrine as matters of style without following its rule himself, to submit his phrases to all the tricks which occurred to his mind or touched his imagination, to err by excess of subtlety, or diverge into exaggeration, he was none the less Seneca, the writer, the thinker, who, whenever he touched the margin of the beautiful — and that was often the case — was supreme. To the same school and the same period belongs Aulus Persius Flaccus. None of the masters of the age of Augustus, in the superior form of their works, had attained in thought the lofty regions where Stoic faith was wont to charm the soul of the young poet of the Porch. His verses, hopelessly obscure, form a confused web, like clouds in a stormy sky lit up by vivid flashes of lightning. But after two thousand years the light is sufficiently brilliant to reveal, through the dimness of centuries, the face of Persius standing out in its purity, mingled with pride, against the blood-stained background of imperial Rome.

CHAPTER VI

The Silver Age of Latin literature—Portrait of Trajan—Rome at the height of her rule—General view of the known world in the reign of Trajan—Rapid decline—The latest period of Greek and Roman literature—Alexandria, the metropolis of the East—The Alexandrian philosophers—Parallel and rival development of Alexandrianism and Christianity—Supreme effort of transformed paganism—Julian—The fourth century.

§ 1.

THUS the Roman intellectual ideals replaced the Greek ideals of form, and the Stoic school succeeded the Virgilian. Roman literature was to diverge further from the Greek by the energy of feeling displayed by the works of this period. This development of originality corresponded to the latter greatness of Rome under Trajan.[1]

This prince was a soldier at the early age of fourteen, but not a scholar. His vanity was sufficiently satisfied in the interest he took in letters and in encouraging their culture. Trajan did not compose his own speeches, but his judgment was marked by the wisdom of his sober and determined policy. His imperial personality did not enter into the domain of art in jealous interference[2] as in the case, both puerile and disastrous, of Hadrian, his successor ; but he had a taste for culture, and he evinced it in intellectual matters, in sculpture, in architecture, which during his reign attained their final expression of nobility and splendour.

[1] Dubois-Guchan, *Tacite et son siècle.*

[2] Trajan employed the architect Apollodorus, whom Hadrian put to death, in all his magnificent buildings.

Allowing every one the right of speaking according to his conscience, of judging and condemning his predecessors, knowing that the charges laid against bad rulers, however grave they might be, were, after all, the greatest praise of good princes, this emperor, a man of good heart, set men's minds free. Literature was widely affected thereby. There then arose a sudden crop of satirical and vengeful works.

Rome, aroused from the silence and sleep of the proscriptions,[1] and recovering from the torpor of a crushing tyranny, was desirous to brand the oppressors, by revising Cæsarian history, which had been falsified through fear and adulation. She accuses them of a number of crimes during eighty-five years of tyranny from Tiberius to Domitian. No one escaped the searching scrutiny; each had to receive his testimony or verdict at the tribunal of opinion. C. Fannius contributed his book on the *Victims of Nero*, which Pliny the Younger mentions. With a frankness equal to that of Procopius, Suetonius drew up his terrible indictment on the horrible debauches and disgraceful life of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero—"human clay kneaded with blood"; Juvenal uttered his ardent cry of anger, which he had restrained within his breast, until the dagger of the gladiators had done their worst to sanguinary Domitian, "another Nero, but a bold one," whom another poet, a fashionable poet, read throughout the Empire—from Rome to the Scythians, frivolous Martial—had loaded with flatteries. Indignation made Juvenal the vehement interpreter of public satire, the rugged justiciar of the Cæsarian corruptions and violence. Then Tacitus appeared to inscribe his sentences in stone on the portals of history. The political fortune of Tacitus, begun under Vespasian, increased under Titus, raised by Domitian to the highest point to which one could attain before reaching the consulate, namely, the Prefecture, had brought him into direct contact with the political, social, and literary circles of his age. He mingled with men in order to study

[1] Franz de Champagny, *Les Césars*.

and depict them. Witness of the horrible tragedies which the Senate had also seen enacted during the last three years of Domitian, his memory still trembled thereat ; and when once Domitian was dead, he had resolved, without ceasing to be an orator, to give an account of the events which he had seen as an eye-witness, and to arouse the conscience of humanity with regard to them.

We can say nothing fresh about Tacitus, model of historians, both profound and subtle, upright and impassioned, impartial without indifference, firm without excess of ardour, and, above all, philosopher, moralist, and thinker? His sanity and perspicacity which enabled him to analyse the causes of events, the courageous liberty with which his pen lashed the scandalous lives of the emperors, the calm energy with which his judgments abound, have founded a school which has been the object of admiration for centuries. His reflections are like discoveries which one is led to examine. He has contributed more than any other historian to the elevation of human thought.[1]

Philosophy, like history and satire, continued to develop ; under the early Cæsars it had suffered persecution. Sejanus, the favourite of Tiberius, examined Attalus the Pythagorean

[1] After his return from Germany, Tacitus (to whom royal favour would have been as disastrous as disgrace itself), held aloof in silence and retirement. The accession of Neva allowed him once more to ascend the steps of the *cursus honorum*. He became Consul the following year. We must, however, remark that the impartiality of Tacitus has been called in question, and that it has not issued, confirmed and entire, from the researches of the German historical school. Voltaire, one of the first, if not the first, introduced incredulity as regards the veracity of Tacitus, that "fanatic sparkling with wit," as he calls him. One of the most learned thinkers of the eighteenth century French school, the paradoxal Linguet, waged an extraordinary campaign in favour of Tiberius against Tacitus. Napoleon, who certainly had his reasons for not liking an adversary of tyranny, called him a detractor of humanity. By the best-founded and most impersonal arguments the learned critics of Germany have, on certain points and facts, weakened the authority of the greatest of historians. (With regard to the political opinions of Tacitus, see Mommsen, Academy of Berlin, 1886 ; G. Boissier, *Tacitus*, chap. iii., 1903.)

concerning his plainly expressed contempt for the ephemeral successes of intriguers. Cynics such as Demetrius, the consoler of the last moments of Thraseas, troubled the masters of Rome. These daring spirits had incurred the anger of Vespasian, whose habitual clemency was stained with the murder of Helvidius, later that of Titus, when he, sharing the purple and calling himself the prince of youth, issued proscriptions, encouraged informers, and gave his enemies up to torture in order that he might the better fit himself to merit the appellation "the delight of mankind." Domitian drove the Cynics from Rome. At that time philosophy had become less necessary to the consolation of mankind, as was necessary previously, in view of the spectacles of triumphant crime and crowned folly. But, nevertheless, the circle of its moral conceptions widened, just as, under the Flavians, a distinct progress in morals was made, owing to the sense of family relationship. Moreover, ideas advanced appreciably in the interval of time which separates the freed slave of Epaphroditus from the teacher of Nero. Epictetus surpassed the humanity of Seneca by extending it to fraternity.[1] A slave himself, his writings were read by many workers and slaves.[2] Thus, considering philosophy as his gospel, Dion Chrysostom—Dion of the golden mouth—evangelist to the heathen, addressed his teaching to simple men, to the crowd. He went from town to town, to Rome, Athens, Rhodes, Egypt, Asia, among the Greeks and barbarians, to preach his noble doctrines.

Epictetus, Dion Chrysostom, Plutarch—the union of these three important men, teaching at the same time in the Greek tongue the principles of two different schools, in the reigns of Nero and Trajan, was the astounding sign of the reconciliation of philosophy and power. A somewhat friendly adversary of the Stoics, whose contradictions he examined and ex-

[1] Cf. Franz de Champagny, *Les Césars;* Martha, *Les Moralistes sous l'empire romain;* G. Boissier, *La philosophie romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins.*

[2] Origen, *Contra Celsum.*

aggerated, Plutarch is, of all the thinkers of antiquity, the one who most closely approaches the modern grasp of ideas.[1]

§ 2.

This important period was, as it were, a solemn pause in the political and moral history of Roman power.

Rome was at the height of her domination. Inheriting Grecian progress and civilisation, she generously dispensed the benefits to all the peoples who had rallied round her imperious ascendancy, or evinced a clever policy of sympathy and friendliness. With Africans, Asiatics, Gauls and Germans living in the City it became a Universe in miniature.

By sustained effort Rome had absorbed East and West, had linked with her destiny Spain, Britain, Gaul, Greece, Egypt, Asia, Syria, and crushed the Semitic race so obstinately opposed to her work, namely, Carthage and Judæa. She had reduced confused nations, willingly or by dint of compulsion, to a uniformity of speech, law, and religion. In the first century the geographer Strabo declares that the Bithynians, Mysians, Phrygians, and Lydians had lost all notion of their own language ; the priests of Egypt no longer understood their inscriptions ; Gaul was romanised, and Africa had become latinised. For a moment Rome might well believe she constituted fully the universal and eternal city, the centre of nations and of a single people.

It was a period of unique splendour in the history of the world. It was prolonged into the second century, which had opened under the regenerating power of Trajan, and closed, like a too brief period of peace and glory, almost immediately after the death of Marcus Aurelius. We may say that classical literature was extinguished under Trajan. In vain did Nerva, Marcus Aurelius, the crowned philosopher, and the Antonines endeavour to restore purity of morals, high

[1] See the excellent pamphlet of M. Gréard on Plutarch.

mental and moral ideals, reason, to men's minds, and to inspire their imaginations.

Marcus Aurelius will always be regarded as a splendid example of the well-balanced independent soul, but neither he nor his successors were able to still the universal turmoil, to restore literary ability, nor to guard the Empire from disintegration.[1] The Roman destiny which promised the sons of the Wolf universal supremacy, did not guarantee its continuance.

There are many descriptions of the passing of this dream of universal empire, against which the Oriental, the Christian, and the barbarian had successively struggled. Rome herself was forced to combat with the heterogeneous elements she had wished to combine. The victim of inevitable disorganisation, she saw herself in her turn the object of the contention and jealousy of the rest of the world.

§ 3.

Long before the barbarians had crossed her frontiers Rome had more than once been affected by the influence of races she had conquered. Greek influence, in spite of its self-conscious superiority, which was paramount in Rome, was succeeded by Eastern influence centred in Alexandria. This influence, owing something to the Greeks, can be traced through Egypt to India. Alexandria, splendidly situated between two seas and two great continents, supplied a centre of ideas and furnished means of communication. This city

[1] A Stoic at heart, disillusioned, but outwardly devout, regarding nothing as certain in the world, except the universal emptiness of life, it was from this he drew his rules of goodness, virtue, and honour. He has left some noble pages on such subjects as fraternity, social relationship, and the duties springing therefrom. Nevertheless we must admit that the acts and morality of the great emperor were not always in perfect accord with the phrases of his Hellenic prose, and it is the contrast of his superior nature with the general decadence of his times that entitles Marcus Aurelius to be so often represented by modern writers as the wisest, noblest, and most virtuous of men.

was the hot-bed for all the faiths and philosophies of Asia and Europe. Philosophic thought was both deepened and widened there. Rome tried all forms of Greek faith without success. Not knowing whither to turn amidst general scepticism, the dying out of faith, the corruption of heart, the emptiness of sentiment, the mind turned to philosophy for relief.

Various pagan sages had dimly perceived the hypothesis of a single Supreme Being as the ultimate end of their teaching. The Alexandrian school took up this idea and developed an abundance of doctrine which continued for several centuries. It finally produced nothing less than a combination of the mystic visions of the East with the most ambitious conceptions of Greek philosophy. By this tendency to universality, erudition, history, and morals quitted their exclusive spheres of ancient learning; they assumed the œcumenical character of Christianity, which equally wanted to reduce everything to unity.

The Alexandrians who represented the old world, which, threatened in its existence, refused to die, concentrated round its most active element—that is to say Greek thought—all the energy and resource it still possessed.

But another power, in opposition to this, grew up and increased continuously and irresistibly. This doctrine of moral regeneration emanated from Palestine. John the Baptist, the Forerunner, had announced it to the Jews about the middle of the eighth century of Roman reckoning, and Jesus of Nazareth, who declared Himself to be born of woman and of the Holy Ghost, and that He was the pacific conqueror, friend of the poor and weak, bore witness to it in person. There were not wanting disturbances that always precede a great religious movement. This new cult brought, it professed, peace on earth, and, like all powers that aspire to take deep root in the faith of mankind, promulgated great and noble promises. The conception of the immortality of the soul had entered Judaism with the book of *Wisdom*. To

all who inquired, "To what end shall we practise virtue?" Messianism, struggling into life from the time of Daniel, brought the answer that Heaven would make atonement for injustice and sufferings here below. The lamentations of the book of Enoch had given place to the boundless hopes of the Gospel. The eternal possession of the Kingdom of God, the equal dealing out of justice between master and slave, strong and weak, rich and poor, and the vision of endless felicity—the prospect was too alluring not to attract humanity, then still so far from being capable of conceiving a rational civilisation without mysterious revelation and without compensation of a world to come.

The Orient, as represented by Alexandria and Judæa shared in the spiritual progress of the Roman Empire.

Judæa was situated at the centre of the vast peninsula, between the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, between Asia and Africa, in contact with the Mediterranean by means of the Phœnician cities of Tyre and Sidon, through Philistia and Samaria, and touching all civilisations: that of India by way of Chaldæa, that of Egypt by way of Stony Arabia and Phœnicia, that of Europe by the Mediterranean, and that of Asia Minor by way of Syria—Judæa, as well as Alexandria, was in a wonderful position to spread far and cause to bear fruit in distant lands the idea of the world-wide kingdom of the Messiah.[1]

Until then Judæa and the Greco-Latin world had been like two spheres, moving side by side but under two opposing influences. They met at the turning-point of this decisive epoch, and were destined to exert a profound mutual influence.

It was the Jews who implanted on Roman soil the germ of this conquering idea. Very early after His death people had collected and written down the sermons of Jesus in the Aramaic language, and had recorded His wonderful actions. The accepted history of Jesus based upon the words of

[1] Dubois-Guchan, *Tacite et son siècle*, p. 216.

His early disciples, and later[1] written down in gospel form according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They reduced the ideas and doctrines of Christ to words in order to propagate them in the world.

Nevertheless, there was not at first unanimity in the chronicle of events, for there existed among the early preachers of the Gospel uncertainty and variation. The apostles seemed unconscious of the purely spiritual character of the long-expected Messiah, whom Biblical tradition and the glosses of the Apocalypse persisted in depicting as the temporal Messiah, the triumphant king and final liberator of the Jews. The organisation of the primitive Church over which James, the brother of Jesus, presided, had been modelled on that of the synagogue, and the names of those who succeeded him as bishops of Jerusalem, Simeon, Justus, Zachæus, Tobias, John, Levi, Ephraim, Joseph, or Judah, recall clearly the tribes of Israel. The rites and faith were simple; theological imagination had not as yet disturbed the original design with its thousand complications. Symbolism in the new religion was at two stages only: the confession of Jesus and the consecration by baptism. It did not remain long so simple. The disputes of the Ebionites and of the orthodox, the pressure brought to bear upon the converted Hebrews by the Jews who remained true to their faith, the rivalry of the apostolic influences, which had grown and become strengthened by the massing of followers, without distinction of country or climate, soon brought the work of Judaic Christianity to a standstill, and Gnostic Christianity, more or less deeply founded on Oriental Magism, took its place. We already find traces of this latter doctrine in Philo of Alexandria. He was attached to all the Jewish

[1] "To-day in the civilised world only our Russian people can, thanks to the censorship, remain in ignorance of the works of historical criticism of the last hundred years, and can retain the ingenuous opinion that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke were written as they now stand, each separately, and as a whole work, by the authors to whom they were attributed."—TOLSTOI.

traditions, a Platonist, Stoic or Peripatetic, according as he adopted in turn the mostly widely opposed opinions, he succeeded in bringing them into harmony with the books of Moses and the story of Israel ; he was, indeed, the representative of the movement then active in the East and of the religious school of his compatriots. Nevertheless we cannot really locate, before Simon Magus and his disciples of the first century, Menander, Colinth, and Dositheus, the development of Gnosticism, which was the source of so many secondary sects,[1] and which gave rise to so many disputes and so many useless controversies in the very heart of the Early Church in Syria and Egypt. However, the Monotheism revealed by Jesus Christ and subsequently preached by St. Paul, enlarged the doctrine of a chosen people of God, in an individual tract of territory, and succeeded in time in gaining ground in the greater part of the world. The stern Jew had received a sudden illumination from it, and as the apostle of the Gentiles he embarked at Seleucia, bent on the conquest of souls, and landed full of faith on the shores of Greece. He traversed Philippi, Amphipolis, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, and, unmoved by plastic beauty and the masterpieces of an "idolatrous" art, he preached indifference to earth and its joys, insisted on the nothingness of man here below, compared with his future blissful state in paradise, proclaiming to the humble, the poor, and the suffering of every kind and race the Kingdom of God which was to come, and for which, alas! humanity is still waiting.

It was indeed time. Threatened in the very foundations of its thought, Hellenism contributed to its own ruin. Universal doubt, induced by the vague objectivity of worship, had penetrated unhappy and inquiring souls. Olympus trembled,

[1] In the second century those of Basilides, Saturninus, Cerdo, Valentinus, Marcion, Apelles, Bardesanes, Tatian, Carpocrates, Manes, Gnosticism was destined to be stayed in its progress by the re-appearance in Persia of pure Magism, in the reign of Ardéchyr-Babegan.

and the mysterious voice of Paxos was soon to announce to the world that "great Pan is dead." Polytheism was dying amidst corruption, scepticism, "*illuminism*" and theurgy; and the invasion at Rome by a crowd of divinities unknown at the times of Cato had, so to speak, submerged the ancient Greco-Latin mythology. "Marcus Aurelius," says Capitolin, "filled Rome with strange cults."[1] Sceptical and bereft of illusions himself, he left them scornfully to work in men's consciences. Although not moved by the same all-embracing and indifferent eclecticism, his successors continued to increase the confusion of faiths in the sacred city.

In the world of thought, poetry and invention did not succeed in throwing off their languor. In all men's minds there was the sense of approaching change in things religious. This immense aspiration was not of recent origin, nor was it the only reason of the success of the Christian faith. It had other and deeper causes of a political and social order.

With the decline of the Empire and the degradation of nations and individuals is concomitant the rapid decay of Rome; the sentiments of patriotism, citizenship, family relations, and religion were nearly destroyed owing to the oppression of injustice and a pitiless tyranny. This destroyed all hope; the only freedom left to man was that of dreams. Full of lassitude and disgust, perfection consisted in despising the earth to which no powerful tie survived. His only happiness lay in vague visions of the supernatural.

From the Orient, says Taine, came a mysterious and intoxicating breath. From Persia, India, Egypt, and Syria this excitement spread like disease.

Rumours of miracles and marvels were on all lips. Recently prophets had reappeared in Judæa; Simon Magus and Dositheus had successors, and people re-

[1] So also did Commodus, and later, in the third century, Elagabalus and Alexander Severus.

membered the thaumaturge Apollonius of Tyana,[1] the heathen Christ, who pretended to raise the dead.

The women gladly embraced Eastern superstitions. Their imaginations, eager for mystery and the pomp and show of external form, found in Isis, the Syrian Astarte and Mithra, the most extensive series of expiatory purifications, orgiacal initiations, symbolic display and an outlet for their extravagant devotions.

Christianity was scarcely founded when sects began to multiply. Endless controversies immediately arose concerning mere phantoms of ideas and shades of meaning so subtle as to be incomprehensible. Gnostics, Valentinians, Ophites, Essenes, Carpocratians, blended their hallucinations and wild ideas. In the third century a single apologist, Hippolytus—the Saint Hippolytus of the Roman calendar—counted no less than thirty-four heresies to be refuted,[2] and how many subtle and insane notions !

The remains of ancient worships, "voluptuous naturalism, exalted mysticism, profound pantheism, Bible texts, the apocryphal gospels, the dogmas of philosophers, interpretations of symbols, astrological reveries were lost in a mass of incoherent doctrines, a moving abyss of disputes and ecstasies, a prodigious chaos in which the divine and human, matter and spirit, the supernatural and natural, seethed amidst light and darkness."[3]

§ 4.

Expiring polytheism clung with a desperate effort to the demonstrations of its scholars. It was no longer a matter, indeed, of reviving the colourless phantoms of the Olympus;

[1] Heathen controversialists, especially Hieracles, wished to oppose him to Jesus Christ.

[2] See *Hippolytus und Kallistus*, by J. Dœllinger; *Hippolytus und die römischen Zeitgenossen*, by Dr. Volkmar.

[3] Cf. Schultze, *Geschichte des Untergangs des Griechisch-römischen Heidentums;* Gaston Boissier, *Fin du paganisme*, 2 vols.

the oracles were silent. "The gods were no longer the stature of men." For a long time Lucian, a Greek of the latter days of Greece, who has been declared to be a contemporary of Voltaire in character and mind, had completely drowned paganism in the flood of ridicule. But so much philosophy had not existed in the world without some people endeavouring to extract a purified doctrine therefrom.

Ambitious to connect the god they sought and the external world, the Alexandrians had built up their famous theory of emanation upon hypotheses more specious than consistent, and evolved from their imagination.

Meanwhile the sophists performed miracles; the ancient disputes were revived in battles of words. Athens wished still to be called the city of letters and arts; jealous of her former fame, she delighted to attract the studious youth of Europe and Asia; and this youth, eager for the marvellous in science and truth, filled the city with debates. The Alexandrian Triad then corresponded to the Christian Trinity, the one god of Porphyry and Iamblichus to the universal God of the Christians, the explanation of myths to the revelations of Scripture.[1]

Christian churches arose opposite pagan temples. The followers of the future rival religions, vying with each other in ardour, hastened to attend the same lessons. Strong in the enlarged and purified faith, the last Platonists met the disciples of Christ in the gardens of the Academy. These were eager to defend and propagate His dogmatic teaching, until such times as they could support their arguments by another sovereign power, the policy of Constantine.[2] The

[1] The enthusiastic mysticism excited by the writings of Porphyry and Plotinus allowed too much digression from the essential principles not to degenerate sadly in the hands of their disciple into pure chimera. The doctrines of these great philosophers, transformed and changed beyond recognition, driven from one inconsequence to another, finally ended in a veritable charlatanism, established on the practices of magic and theurgy.

[2] We may compare the eclectic Roman Emperor making his conversion known and promulgating the Edict of Milan to the First Consul

victory gained over Maxentius, with or without the help of the *labarum*, decided the establishment of Christianity as the state religion.

§ 5.

A few years later, Basil and Gregory of Nazianzen already celebrated, from one end of Greece to the other, by their perfect acquaintance with profane learning, which they turned to the advantage of the Christian cause, met Julian, the brother of the last Cæsar, in the schools of Athens. He and Gallus had escaped alone from the massacre of all his family, a princely philosopher and subtle theologian, who, beneath the sign of his baptism, fostered the hope of exalting in royal fashion his beloved Hellenism. Julian, when about to visit the tombs of the martyrs at Nicomedia, or to read the Gospels to the people in the church at Cæsarea, was contemplating shortly rekindling the fires on the altars and purifying the air with the smoke of sacrifices. The rhetoric of Himerios or Libanios sounded empty in his ears, the witchery of Maxim did not captivate his reason. The metaphysics of the school of Porphyry seemed dry and grievously complex to him. The word of the Galilean pleased him no better; his inflexible morality disconcerted him. So much austerity repulsed his courage and froze his imagination. "A hymn," he cried, "a hymn to glorify life, light, and happiness!"

The columns of the last pagan temples were trembling on their bases; a methodical destruction threw down the beautiful statues of Aphrodite and Diana, of the gods and goddesses of his beloved Greece. He groaned at heart on that account. "Soon," he reflected, "there will not be left a single block of marble bathed in sunlight."

The conflict between the Galilean doctrines and rejuvenated paganism transformed by the learned mysticism of the rhetoricians and Greek philosophers, between antique beauty

signing the Concordat because it tallied with his ambitions. (See the remarkable history of Burckhardt. *Die Zeit Constantins.*)

and modern symbolism was maintained with bitterness. From one to the other Julian's mind fluttered with persistent uncertainty, just as it had hesitated between the life of action and of thought. Finally, the philosopher, having donned the purple, took his side with passion and ardour.

All his youth had been hardly repressed beneath a sombre monastic garb, his desires imprisoned, his passion for Hellenic art chastised as if it were a revolt or crime. He came to the throne ; master of the world, he would now throw off the mask. The revenge he demanded was to be complete and entire ; he claimed the right to impose it on all in the name of philosophical reason, in the name of Nature itself, outraged by what he called "the mediocrity of Christian sentiment." In all the cities of the Empire he hoped to found schools, chairs for reading and discussing Greek literature. He would set up again the altars to the gods in whom, henceforth, "the celebration of the form and of the senses" would prevail ; he would re-establish the cult of pure beauty,[1] and that was to be the supreme law of the Empire.

Julian, having become Emperor, according to a contemporary writer, "broke, like an angry lion, the ties which bound him to Christianity." Abandoning to a certain extent his own ideas of equity and tolerance, he nearly approached persecution, if not torture, which was now a thing of the past : he applied a sort of intellectual and moral pressure by excluding Christians from public offices and closing the schools to them.[2]

[1] "We do not worship dead stone, metal, or wood, but the soul, the living soul of beauty in the models of the purest human beauty." (Dmitry de Mérej Kowsky, *La Mort des Dieux*, xii.)

[2] Now and again Julian would write. He wrote Greek with great purity, and has left behind such works as the *Misopogon*, or the *Enemy of the Beard* (a satire directed against the inhabitants of Antioch), and the *Cæsars*, or the *Banquet* (a picture of the virtues, vices, and foibles of the emperors), all of which are marvels of sprightliness, grace, good classic taste, and elegant writing.

The Greek and Latin teachers were not checked thereby; the Church henceforth felt too sure of herself and of circumstances to abandon the direction of men's minds. A rigorously organised society was necessary to stand against the storm, to hold out when everything crumbled and decayed, and finally to overcome the tempest and issue victorious from the fight. The Church was just such a society; she had attained that degree of cohesion which assures a triumph.

In order to secure this triumph the Church had advantageously called to her aid the outward pomp and show of religious celebrations. She had already grasped their importance and power in supporting religious propaganda, and had allowed pagan rites, somewhat transformed, to colour the severity of her dogmas. The smoke of incense, like the smoke of ancient sacrifices, ascended in her temples before other images; there were also the glow of lights, the harmony of voices and music, the solemnity of ceremonial, the thousand forms of visual and auditory exaltation of the pure idea and of symbolism. Certain teachers protested. "Images and religion are two incompatible terms," said Lactance. No one heeded their protests. Christian anthropomorphism appealed to the fervour of the simple-minded and irresistibly opened the doors of the sanctuary.

This paganising of Christianity, whilst rendering the primitive austerity of its tenets clearer to the eye by means of a show of images, ceremonies, and celebrations—like an incursion of a new mythology—resulted in increasing the fervour of their particular means of proselytising—namely, woman. From the very beginning the new religion had captured her mobile and inflammable imagination, and had at the same time gained her soul and her gratitude. In reforming the laws, principles, sentiments, and conditions of the old world, it had offered woman a wider sphere of consideration and influence. Its first act was to raise her from the moral discredit to which the contemptuous, scoffing,

and disdainful epigrams and the constant attacks of the classic writers had reduced her. Poets, scholars, and philosophers had represented her, almost unanimously, as an inferior being, naturally prone to sin, incapable of genuine affection, and expert in evil. The Fathers of the Church re-established the dignity of the sex in idealising it in the features of The Virgin. They recognised the lofty and important mission of woman in the work of spiritual regeneration. Her part was no longer bounded by the necessities of life and nature; it was sanctified and enlarged.

The religious idea prevailed over all others; it spread and became universal and all-powerful. We see the approach of the reign of asceticism, monasticism, and the rule of chastity.

§ 6.

Warmth and life were concentrated, from a literary point of view, in Christian eloquence. Outside that we find hardly anything but sonorous and empty phraseology. It was in vain that the rhetorician of the time, the most favoured of fortune and the poet beloved at Court, the dispenser of laurels, Ausonius, in short, and his much-glorified rival, Claudius Claudianus, strove to revive a dying literature, which was dead to any further inspiration. Why was not the flame forthcoming? Was it not because the cult of art for art's sake, and the mere brilliance of form, did not afford a strong enough source?

Poetry had ceased to exist. We do not say it had died out in view of the original and genuine qualities in the religious hymns of Ambrose and Prudentius.[1] It was to be found in the sight of two societies at war with one another—one of which embraced all the powers of the past, the other

[1] This Spaniard of the fourth century, Aurelius Prudentius Clement, has certain of the faults of his time. He atones for them amply by the gifts of his own nature; the cadence and grace, united with austerity, warmth of sentiment, and the spontaneity of an imagination readily freed from earth to rise to the grandeur of eternal beauty.

bearing within itself the possibilities of a stormy future ; it existed in the mere spoken word endeavouring, alone and unaided, to triumph over the intolerance of statesmen, over the sophistry of the learned, over the patriotic persistence of certain people such as Symmachus—the last great orator of pagan Rome—and over the apathy of the masses.[1]

From Athanasius to Augustine there certainly existed an extraordinary mental stir in the primitive Church, eager to convert and to conquer. Abandoning a wretched Government to destruction, and being isolated in the midst of political and social ruin, she fostered the development of her eloquence in proportion as all the rest perished.[2]

Her orators never grew weary in battling either against the last defenders of a dying faith, or against heresies which, in fact, kept alive their ardour and fed their zeal. They encouraged each other by active correspondence, attesting the rapid communication of ideas at this time. Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, Synesius promulgated far and wide their lessons and doctrines as much by their personal letters as by their treatises. A sincere friendship strengthened the ties that bound them. Literary historians, such as Villemain, kindled their imaginations in their descriptions of Augustine, Paulinus of Nole, Sulpicius, Severus, Delphinus, Amandus, with serene hearts exchanging their pious illusions, conversing among themselves in perfect intimacy concerning the changes of the times, refreshing themselves in hours of rest and intercourse, which were marked by mystic reveries and much study and work.

[1] One of the last advocates of polytheism in the West, Symmachus, with florid and cultured eloquence which is still admired, pleaded the cause of the ancient gods before Gratian and Valentinian II. His chief adversary was Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, who came off victorious.

[2] *Tableau de l'éloquence chrétienne au quatrième siècle.* 2nd edition, 1849. 8vo.

Cf. Amédée Thierry. *Saint Jérôme; la Société chrétienne à Rome* (1867. 2 vols. 8vo).

CHAPTER VII

Artistic decadence seems suspended—Decadence hastened by the barbarian invasions—Some wreckage—Moral and social state of the peoples of Europe from the fifth to the eighth centuries—Legends and folksongs of the Germans and Scandinavians—Origin of the Eddas—Débris of classical antiquity—In the Eastern Empire a practical cessation of literary effort.

§ 1.

A GENERAL revival, which combined in its progress the results of ancient knowledge, may be traced to the noble impetus given to literature by the Early Church. Gaul was conspicuous in the front rank. In perfection of style Aquitaine,[1] one of the provinces, rivalled Greece and Rome. More flourishing schools were not to be seen elsewhere ; more perfect Latin could not be spoken.

The too rapid progress of artistic decadence was in a measure suspended. A general bourgeoning of ideas and sentiments hitherto unknown carried with it a reviving sap in all directions.

Suddenly a terrible disaster befell Roman civilisation, and at one stroke overwhelmed these promising efforts, throwing everything back to a state of pristine barbarism.

The Romans, whose thirst for conquest was only slaked when they had extended their empire from the Euphrates in the east to the Rhine and Atlantic in the north and west,

[1] Ausonius has preserved in one of his poems the names of thirty famous masters who, including himself, occupied with distinction the chair of Bordeaux.

might well have flattered themselves that the whole known world rang with the fame of their exploits. They themselves were ignorant of the fact that distant Asia enclosed vast territories to which not even the faintest echo of their glory had penetrated, and that in the north wandering populations, or such as could easily become so, were pressing onwards in vast hordes, of whose number and dwelling-place the Romans were not even aware.

The day came when these regions opened wide; the Scythians, Germans, and Huns poured forth.

Emerging from the obscurity of their forests and temporary encampments, they rushed upon the Latin cities, rich with spoils from the whole world. Having only known a primitive civilisation and the necessaries of bare existence, they suddenly had the opportunity of seizing with hungry hands this luxury, these piled-up riches, this magnificence. What a prospect of goodly spoils, what dreams of inexhaustible booty to lure these Goths, Burgundians and Franks!

The domestic enslavement of her people, who for seven hundred years had cherished an enthusiasm for liberty and glory, had ruined Rome's power of attack. Undermined at the centre by so many causes of decay, which combined in the general moral and political downfall, constantly harassed on her frontiers, the empire faltered in her defence. From her enfeebled hands she let fall the jewel of civilisation of which she had been the guardian.

When the storm had cleared it could be seen that the overthrow of these two states was complete. The Germans, as masters, traversed Gaul, Italy and Spain. A large number of foreigners was violently mingled with the native population, imposing, by right of the sword, in the very homes of the conquered, their customs, beliefs and traditions. Roman leaders were replaced everywhere by Gothic and German chiefs, who sat as judges in the seats of the praetors and consuls.

The Western Empire thus crumbled away. By the same

fell blow the Eastern Empire was shaken to its very foundations by the echo of the disaster; its roots were loosened; it became the predestined prey for succeeding invaders, for the Vandals under Genseric, for the Persians under Chosroes, and of the Arabs under Mahomet.

§ 2.

Through many vicissitudes, and with ever-shifting boundary, the German Empire was evolved to be wrought into unity under the mighty hand of Charlemagne. The stream of barbarian invasion spread with devastating force over the remains of arts and institutions. Some wreckage, however, survived which only served to point out the magnitude of the disaster.[1] Yet how precious are these fragments. Traditions are not entirely lost. The survivals of ancient civilisation and Christian culture incorporated themselves with barbarism and will be seen to become the fertilising agents which by slow evolution transform it.

"Literary history," says a critic, "like political history, has its blank pages." After many years of exceptional fruitfulness a sterile time ensues. Having worked through epochs of wonderful literary activity, we must enter long, arid periods, where we encounter at long intervals, individual works lost indeed to us, but scarcely equal to the least remarkable of the preceding period." But the human mind is never absolutely asleep. "There has never been a century quite devoid of gifted poets," says the learned Polycarp Lyser, after having patiently traced the little-known progress of Latinity during the dark ages. Moreover, this aphorism had reference only to the artificial poetry of the learned, he overlooked that deeper and more secret spring, namely, popular lyrics.

The majority of the nations who had rushed to seize the

[1] When the author of the *City of God* apologised for the sack of Rome by Alaric as being a punishment from heaven, did he foresee such a downfall or so complete a catastrophe?

position left by the fall of the Roman Empire brought with them their own traditions. Some, like the Huns, Alans, and Vandals, were savages without traces of civilisation, but each of the others boasted a golden age in their past and celebrated its heroic deeds in songs and poems. The same fierce satisfaction they had in displaying their savage strength, they evinced in relating their dogged bravery in battle, their violent and drunken revelry, or their calm expectancy of a warrior's material and sensual paradise.

The Scandinavians boasted of their old runic songs. The minstrels (Skalds), feasted by princes and applauded by warriors, were wont to sing in narrative, permeated with an obscure symbolism, the deeds and praises of gracious Freya, learned Vola and mighty Odin. They would recite to the common people the ancient mythology, whose legends had already stirred the imagination of the Scythians and produced in the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries the famous Eddas; these in their turn were destined to exercise so marked an influence over the Germanic world. Among the Saxons on the one hand the Sagas, rugged in style, were transmitted by word of mouth from one generation to another, from which sprang the first epic, the oldest history and the most ancient romance in English—the poem *Beowulf*, and that embroidered legend of *Gudrun*, that Odyssey of the Baltic.[1] On the other hand the deeds of King Theodoric (the groundwork of the *Nibelungenlied*) inflamed the valour of the Goths and Burgundians.

When the German, in other regions, displaced Celtic tribes which had long been settled in Western Europe, they found

[1] We know nothing certain concerning the genesis of these legends, except that their date is one of the most obscure. J. Wolf regards them as anterior to the birth of Christ, and Schimmelmann does not hesitate to place them as far back as 1500 B.C. Saemund Sigfusson the Wise, in the eleventh century, and Snorre Sturlesson in the twelfth, collected them in Iceland from runic books, with a view to editing them, the one in verse, the other in prose, thus making the first and second Eddas—that is to say the double form in which these traditions finally come down to us.

themselves faced by spirited peoples animated by patriotism and a love of nature. It was these peoples who, before they disappeared, sang in plaintive melody the fall of their country.

The indigenous peoples of Brittany, Wales, and the Highlands of Scotland, Cornwall and the Isle of Man were deprived of their independence, they still clung to their national costume and their own language. The bards Taliesin, Aneurin, Llywarch Hen, and the legendary Myrdhin bore witness to the independence and imaginative qualities of the Cymric race.[1]

Again, when S. Patrick[2] went preaching the Gospel to the various nations in Ireland he met with poets, in spite of the terrible state of barbarism into which the country had relapsed. And these poets had already subjected themselves to the restraint of rhyme. Modern Celtic scholars inform us of the value of these old Irish or Gaelic legends, though they have scarcely shaken themselves free from early

[1] It is impossible to omit mentioning here the extraordinary sensation caused by the publication by Macpherson, in 1762, of the most notorious of literary forgeries—some poems which he attributed to Ossian, a bard of the third century. In reality they were old Scottish Highland songs elaborated by his luxuriant imagination. The pseudo-Ossian obtained immediate acceptance, and later he became a Scotch Homer for the Romantic School. He appeared like a northern Dante, as great and majestic, and no less supernatural than the Dante of Florence, more sensitive than he and more human than the singer of the Iliad. This admiration, shared by the leading lights of the day, lasted until it had been clearly proved that the gossamer dreams of the bard of Fingal were in reality the work of an author of the eighteenth century. He was unquestionably endowed with a subtle intellect. He was quick to assimilate form and style. But he was lacking in force and invention, though aided by an excellent memory. It must be admitted, however, that he skilfully wove into a single poetical work old, scattered songs in the Erse language, Celtic fragments, and primitive traditions of Scotland, together with a number of ideals and expressions borrowed alike from the ancients and moderns.

[2] The Saint himself composed two lines in Irish, which have come down to us :—

Aibbe umal, Patric, numan mô gabrath
Te clan, Patric nandeisi, Theclan ge Brath.

barbarism and superstition, but they nevertheless contain traces of charming realism.

Again, the Franks, who had established themselves in Gaul, were acquainted from the first with lyric and epic poetry. They had their wandering minstrels similar to the Anglo-Saxon *scops*, who went from place to place proclaiming their needs, praising the generosity of their hosts, and rhyming of battles and sports. When invading Roman territory with the Visigoths and Burgundians they had brought their voluminous poetry and their divine Siegfried to the Gauls.

Besides these attempts, constructed little by little by unknown authors or by amateurs, which were the voice of the common people ; the Church alone preserved some remnants of the former civilisation more or less altered ; she only could provide the world with teachers and evangelists. The moral and political conditions then obtaining had become incongruous with the advancement of learning. Europe was shrouded in almost total intellectual darkness. " In this general literary silence," said an historian of the fifth century, " I can only hear the noise of my own pen scratching the paper." It is true that this blank period was honoured by witnessing the last effort of Grecian thought. For Proclus of Lycia was born in 450, a great writer and a great poet, in whom was revived the double genius of Homer and Plato. He was a devout pagan, a worker of miracles, in occult communion with the Muses, and an expert magician. Moreover, he was genuinely sincere in his ideals and in his determination to reconcile Plato with the East and the mythological dogmas with his theory of divine providence. He was the most famous master of the later school of Greek philosophy.[1] But his

[1] The *Œuvres philosophiques* of Proclus were published, with a Latin translation, by Victor Cousin (Paris, 1820–1827, 6 vols., 8vo.), and by Kreuzer (Frankfort, 1821–1825, 5 vols, 8vo.).

We must recall also the names of Nonnus, Quintus of Smyrna, Musæus, the grammarian who carried on the tradition of Hellenism in the fifth and sixth centuries.

fame did not reach the people of the north and west, who were too much occupied in making sure the foundation of their national existence to give serious attention to intellectual subtleties.

The general aspect of the world in the sixth century only reveals the spectacle of religious convulsions, political chaos, and intellectual paralysis. Alexandria had long ceased to be the metropolis of civilisation. More than two centuries had passed since, under Theodosius the Great, an ignorant but devout emperor, the bigoted Archbishop Theophilus had sacked and scattered broadcast the incomparable Ptolemaic library. Leading his bands of fanatics, to whom neither the names nor the books of Hipparchus, Eratosthenes, or Timocharus signified anything, he absolutely destroyed the Alexandrian Serapeum,[1] which was the most superb religious building in the world. He also razed to the ground the Temples of Serapis at Canobus, a town near Alexandria ; in short, he devastated everything that could possibly minister to his insane lust for destruction. Worthy to follow such an one, Cyril, his nephew and successor, in marking Hypatia, the celebrated mathematician, as a victim for the mob, provided an unforgettable date, viz., 414 A.D., for us to remember his villainy and the general doom of Greek culture. They reaped the harvest of what they had sown. For it must be remarked that this wanton destruction of works of art coincided with the fettering of intelligence in the bonds of tyranny. The sacrilegious wreckers of marble had decreed that the dead should be absolutely destroyed, in that they only left their names to encourage their survivors. The vacant place was usurped by the knowledge of the Early Fathers, whose combination of perversity and truth established as an article of faith the doctrine that

[1] It was spacious and magnificent. Columns of the rarest marbles supported the weight of the building. The interior walls were inlaid with plates of silver, gold, and copper. Ammienus Marcellinus (*De Rerum Gestarum*, libri xxxi.) found nothing in the whole world to equal the majestic Serapeum.

all lawful knowledge was to be found within the Scriptural books, and thus succeeded in obstructing all possible progress for a succession of centuries.

In the East incredible calamities befel the Empire.[1] Africa, so long Roman,[2] remained the battlefield of warlike sects, who, in order to decide their quarrels, to slake their thirst for vengeance, to gratify their common hatred, called for assistance to the barbarians, and so let loose ruin and desolation upon the fairest countries of the world. Justinian did repair some of these disasters. He re-conquered Africa and Italy with the sword of Belisarius and Narsês, and re-established the appearance of calm amidst the inexpressible confusion of doctrines by prosecuting and persecuting indifferently philosophers, heretics, Jews, pagans, and Pope Vigilius. The morality of this time was shameless and corrupt to the very last degree. Procopus—Procopus both of the *Annals* and the *Secret History*—has recorded such startling evidence that neutralises somewhat sardonically his

[1] The African wars against the Vandals, the Italian campaigns against the Goths, the famines and plagues, which in the reign of Justinian contrived to form a desolation so terrific that the human race lost thereby some hundred million souls. (Cf. Draper: *Historic du développement intellectuel de l'Europe.* Vol. II.).

[2] From Africa and Carthage came the grammarian Sulpicius Apollinaris, the philosopher Apuleius, who were pagans; Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, and Augustine, who were Christians. Fronto, the famous leader of a school, teacher, and friend of two Emperors, Marcus Aurelius, and Lucius Verus belonged to Cirta. The students at Rome were wont to point with respect to Sulpicius Apollinaris, and Fronto, the famous scholars, moulders of style, and meticulous purifiers of language, when they discoursed together concerning grammatical matters, whilst waiting on the Palatine for an audience with the Emperor. Under the Antonines Apuleius called Carthage the Mnemosyne of the Romans. It was there, the birthplace of Tertullian, that the first great camp of Christianity was formed ere it became master of Rome and Byzantium.

It was from this fortified position that its first theorists disputed with the Alexandrians and their philosophy. Finally, we may say that Conference of Carthage, where S. Augustine crushed the last stand of the Donatists, was one of the great events of Church history in the fourth century and also of the saint's life.

adulatory palinodes on his imperial master. Justinian coveted fame; he did obtain the renown of being a great legislator. His claim to the gratitude of men lies in his having freed the jurisprudence of the sixth century from the petrifying influence of Papinian, Ulpian, and other great jurists of the third century, in liberating the present from the pagan and aristocratic past, and in encouraging industrial development in this troubled empire. But he closed the philosophical schools of Athens [1] under pretext of the connection with paganism; and after having taken and retaken the Eternal City five times, he decreed the abolition of the Roman Senate, so that there did not remain more than faint memories of the ancient philosophy and ancient power of Rome. Four years after the death of Justinian, in 569, a man was to be born at Mecca, in Arabia, whose war-cry was to trouble strangely the infatuated bands of Arians, Nestorians, Eutycheans, Monothelites, and Monophysites amidst their vain disputes. The scimitar of Mahomet was to cut the feeble bond which still held Asia and Africa to Christianity.

In Western Europe the sky is not less threatening. Italy, now depopulated, struggles amidst a dreadful crisis. The valley of the Danube has relapsed into utter barbarism. The advance of the new peoples who divided the Empire among themselves is full of uncertainty. At each forward step they took they seemed too ready to re-enter the darkness from which they had struggled with such efforts. In such stormy

[1] Simplicius, the judicious commentator of Aristotle, and Damacius, the last hierophant of the School of Athens, were at the height of their fame when Justinian, in 529, issued this edict. They retired with some of their disciples to Chosroes, King of Persia.

As a legislator Justinian has been fiercely attacked. The German historical school of the nineteenth century more especially has striven to destroy all the prestige of this prince as codifier of the Roman law with the collaboration of Tribonius and Theophilus. An eminent French jurist, Troplong, defends Justinian in an important work entitled *De l'influence du christianisme sur le droit civil des Romains* (1843, 8vo, several editions).

times it is almost impossible to distinguish the really significant factors in intellectual or moral progress, or to appreciate with any exactness the limits of succeeding periods.

Whilst far towards the south the Arabs, rising at the call of Mahomet, threaten to extend their territory over the district from the Straits of Gibraltar to the banks of the Ganges, Latinity struggles valiantly to escape the grip of the Germans. But its domain has become narrowed down increasingly. At Byzantium Hellenism is hardly less impoverished, for there we meet only petty theologians involved in endless angry discussions, despising marriage, exalting chastity, and, under pretext of leading men more expeditiously to heaven, striving to depopulate the earth.

The decadence is general. The seventh century shows it at its worst. Some few flourishing schools existed with difficulty in Gaul; that of Poitiers, where St. Leodegar was brought up, and to which the name of Fortunatus, favourite of Sigebert and platonic lover of Radegonde,[1] added yet further lustre; that of Issoire (Issiodorum), in Auvergne, where S. Priest received his mental training, and had as predecessors Sidonius Apollinaris,[2] the witty Gaul of the fifth century, and in the sixth century Gregory of Tours,[3] the historian of the Franks. Last of all comes the school of Clermont. We find in the biography of S. Bonnet ("the most excellent of sophists," according to his contemporaries)

[1] Although his Latin verse may be archaic, Venantius Fortunatus, celebrated Bishop of Poitiers, evinces genuine feeling and singular tenderness of heart.

[2] In spite of an affected style, Sidonius, subtle and metaphorical to excess, was the last of the classics. His letters and poems afford one of the chief sources of the history of the fifth century. Persecuted by the kings of the Visigoths, he was the sorrowful witness of the fall of Roman power among the Gauls.

[3] Gregory was intellectually uncultured, and his credulity with reference to miracles almost became a vice. Although his language is rough and faulty, and the arrangement of his subjects unmethodical and confused, his narrative is animated, his dialogue good, and his characters are life-like.

that grammar, *i.e.*, literature and classic tradition, were taught at Clermont during the sixth century. Other scholastic centres were formed, and increased their influence but slowly under the fostering care of missionaries.

One can scarcely trace what befel the remnants of poetry and learning; they were dispersed and lost. They might, perhaps, have been discovered, guarded in certain cloisters that handed on the traditions of Alexandria and Byzantium. One would need search even the Cambrian and Irish monasteries, where certain thinkers were endeavouring to reconcile three sources of inspiration and three antiquities—the Bible, Homer, and Celtic lore.

England alone preserved her share of knowledge. She was the most enlightened country of Europe at the end of the eighth century. It was she who was so soon destined to send Alcuin, pupil of Egbert, and truly the Bede of Gaul, to aid Charlemagne as his chief lieutenant in his glorious campaign against the invasion of barbarism.

In the eighth century, when literature was flourishing in the East, in China, India, and among the Arabs, who had become rulers of Spain, or when great autochthonous civilisations were forming in North America (unknown to the rest of the world), Europe was vegetating in an almost absolute state of ignorance. Here and there appear meagre chronicles, mostly only distinguished for their dryness. The monastic writers recorded in the same fashion the transactions of the convent and the events which interestered the world at large. It was all their idea of history. A feeble religious movement could only be noticed in some infrequent books, a collection of legends, the spirit of controversy, or in a few men writing verses or homilies, as if they were performing miracles. To that pitch was literature reduced before its disappearance. A few great and prominent figures stand out against the general greyness.[1] Among these were the

[1] We must mention John, of Damascus, a Syrian, who was the parent of that scholasticism of which indications may be seen in Boethius. He

venerable Bede,[1] who reflected in the North of Europe the culture of the East and South ; Eloi, the popular treasurer of the kings Lothair II. and Dagobert, whom J. J. Amperè calls " a Fénelon in the heart of barbarism." Among others Isidore, Bishop of Seville, that man of universal knowledge, who converted the Arian Visigoths ; Columba, missionary, theologian, poet, and first accurate chronicler of Great Britian ; Adalbert, a pretended Christ ; and Clement, an intrepid rationalist and forerunner of Protestantism in many respects. There were no others.

was born at Damascus in 676, and while among the Greeks to treat of subjects according to the scholastic method, and established there for the first time a system of theology, contributing much to spread the taste for Aristotelian philosophy among the Arabs, in the midst of whom he lived.

[1] This " teacher of the barbarians," as a historian of English literature calls him, had himself perceived how fruitless was his task. Having divided the history of the world into six periods, Bede remarked that the fifth, which extended from the Babylonian captivity to the birth of Christ, was the period of senile decay, and the sixth and present one, the *aetas decrepita, totius morte saeculi consummanda.*

CHAPTER VIII

Charlemagne's Renaissance—Striving towards civilisation—Charlemagne, Alcuin, Rabanus Maurus—Disorder at the end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth centuries—The feudal world—Ignorance once more overshadows Europe.

§ 1.

We have seen that France before the accession of Charlemagne had sunk far below the level of Saxon England, below that of Spain, the home of Isidore of Seville ;[1] below that of Italy, which in the sixth century produced Boethius and Cassiodorus, the last exponents of ancient culture and the first philosophers of the Middle Ages. Their treatises furnished classical text-books so late as the Renaissance. France had almost become the most hopeless country of Europe as regards culture.

Charlemagne and Alcuin came to change this state of things. An emperor and a monk, they represented the two great historically inseparable forces of society, the lay and the clerical. A cultured prince, a Germanic conqueror, a genius alike in the arts of peace and war, Charlemagne inspired a genuine revival. Scholars at his invitation gathered from all quarters, as if to concentrate in one focus their learning and enlightenment. He had already ordered

[1] During this period of great ignorance the theologian chronicler and encyclopædist, Isidore of Seville, *Isidorus Hispalensis*, had gathered together the grammatical traditions of Greece and Rome, and in his *Etymologies* inaugurated a science (or apparently a science) destined to interest all the Middle Ages.

the collection of national songs, and he commissioned Peter of Pisa, Paul the Deacon, Clement of Aquileia to effect the education of his subjects.

In true missionary spirit they zealously disseminated the benefits of education. They would often struggle valiantly to bring the light of reason into dark minds. In their attempts they met with many who obstinately clung to their condition of ignorance, and as Loup de Ferrières remarks, "flattered themselves in despising literature as a superstitious waste of time, the very name of study being abhorrent to them." Charlemagne's civilising efforts failed with regard to these, but went beyond them to gather results elsewhere. Books, however, increased in number. Men returned eagerly to the dispute of subtle theological questions. Each member of the learned court circle wished to distinguish himself in these thorny discussions. Charlemagne did not disdain to support his opinions by rhetorical arguments. Cicero, Macrobius, Apuleius, Plato, and Aristotle supplied the argumentative emperor with materials and evidence. He took a leading part in the dispute concerning Adoptionism,[1] and devoted special attention to the heresy of Iconoclasm,[2] that last effort of Christianity not yet severed from Judaism. For a hundred and twenty years this question of image-worship was the occasion of constant struggles between the emperors and the Church, causing terrible bloodshed in Constantinople, and shook the foundations of the Eastern Empire while provoking the gravest political disturbances in the West.

A mathematician and a poet, an historian and logician, a learned expositor and a student of the records of the saints, an administrative genius, a statesman, a philologist, and in his

[1] The doctrine of Nestorius, revived by Elipand of Toledo and Felix, Bishop of Urgel, about 770, and condemned by the Councils of Frankfort, 794, and Rome, 799.

[2] The majority of historians attribute the origin of Iconoclasm to the Caliph Yezid, who carried on the destruction of images in Syria, and to the Jewish councillors who encouraged the Emperor Leo, a native of Isauria, to proscribe the veneration of images.

private life an ascetic, Alcuin was the all-comprehensive genius of the age. He was versed in classical lore. His subtle and flexible mind was fascinated by the old pagan beauty, which he wished to revive for the benefit of the select few, but he forbade its general dissemination.[1] His contemporaries called him the sacred repository of the liberal arts—*artium liberalium sacrarium*. Speaking critically, none of the writings of the Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastic, whether treatises, pious commentaries, lives of the saints or pedagogic pamphlets are long-winded nor evince great originality. But by his methods of teaching, by founding schools, he, by his influence, according to the standard of the age, furthered, with extraordinary success, the civilising ideas of Charlemagne. He was the first promoter of public instruction in the West. A crowd of disciples followed in his steps, who in their turn became educationalists.

Famous among all of them was Rabanus Maurus, the celebrated Saxon theologian, who studied under Alcuin, to inaugurate subsequently a complete system of education in his own district.[2] He was the first, according to the Abbé Trithème, to banish barbarism from the heart of Germany and to *latinise* the country as regards language, whilst John Scotus[3] in Ireland, in the retirement of a monastery, was reviving the neoplatonism and the pantheistic idealism of the School of Alexandria, a kind of link between the learning of the ancient world and the faith of modern times.

In France, schools were now no longer few and far between, but were to be found in every town. Neustria

[1] Alcuin reproached the Archbishop of Treves one day for his excessive love of Virgil, which might, in his opinion, lead him away from the Gospels.

[2] Of his numerous works touching on the seven liberal arts, we possess his *Prosody*, the materials for which were supplied him by Priscian. (*Writings of Alcuin*, Cologne, 1627, 6 vols., fol.).

[3] The principal work of Scotus Erigena, *On the Division of Nature*, brought about his condemnation as a heretic at the hands of Pope Nicholas I.

alone possessed several, from which spread the healthy influence of education, unfortunately, however, tinged with superstitious errors. The most renowned of these scholastic centres was that of S. Martin of Tours, which flourished greatly under the direction of Alcuin and of an ardent admirer of Virgil called Sigulph. The number of its students was prodigious; they even came from England and Germany. The schools in Mahometan Spain and the Arab universities were also crowded with pupils thirsting for knowledge, having journeyed from all quarters of the East.

Talents were developing, and anticipations seemed nearing their realisation. Once more the torch of literature was aflame. But once again the unforeseen, in the shape of political revolutions, was fated to shatter the hopes of reason.

In the disturbances that marked the change from the ninth to the tenth centuries the colossal empire of Charlemagne trembled to its foundations. Against these troublous times the figure of Hincmar[1] looms large. His dexterous and stirring genius shows in his violent struggles with the Church of France and the Church of Rome, in his struggles with the pope and the king, and has left a lasting impress on the age. And the progress which had followed in the wake of the expanding Empire either suddenly ceased or was buried in the same ruins. The inheritors of this gigantic power, which extended from Catalonia to the Elbe, had impaired its unity by dissensions among themselves. There only remained the memory of a great name and the fierce disputes over the fragments of the kingdoms. The two peoples, no longer mastered by a strong will, divided up their possessions. The Franks take one side, the Germans the other. Scarcely have they separated when they will only

[1] Hincmar was the most important political character of the ninth century. Otherwise he was a mediocre theologian, a superficial critic, a laborious and inelegant controversialist, and was even less distinguished in his writings.

meet at the sword's point in battle array. This breaking up of kingdoms and territories must necessarily be followed by social disturbances. It was so—by an endless number of private feuds and general conflicts. Amid the constant struggling of unbridled ambitions the purely intellectual gifts had no chance of developing.[1]

§ 2.

On every favourable site in Western Europe feudalism erected castles and embattled towers. Well armed for its double purpose of defence and oppression, the feudal system was slowly evolved from the ruins of the barbarian world, an unconscious instrument working the purpose of the future and containing under its violent exterior the germs of modern social organisms.

The rule of violence weighed heavily on the people. Constant strife brought into conflict troops of men eager for spoils ;[2] struggles between lords and their vassals arose, between the Church and the State which raided her ; struggles, again, in the bosom of the Church between the bishops and the wealthy and rebellious monks; and, lastly, warfare between the clergy and the pope himself.

These were not happy days for the transactions of the soul. Moral culture could not soften the iron hearts of the feudal lords, involved as they were in never-ending war, whose lives consisted of battles, pillage, blackmail, fatal

[1] We must mention separately the civilising action of Alfred the Great in England, who strove to revive the tender growth of civilisation, which the Danish invasion of the preceding century had crushed. When he became king, as he himself tells us : "There were very few priests on this side of the Humber who knew the English of their Latin prayers, or could translate any Latin document into English. On the other side of the Humber I think there are hardly any—so few, in fact, that I do not recall a single one who was capable of so doing, south of the Thames, when I ascended the throne."

[2] "In the tenth century," says Stendhal, "a man desired two things : firstly, not to be killed; secondly, to have a thick skin."

tournaments, and sensual gratifications.[1] Even the clergy were surrounded in the gathering darkness. They dared not think, for the deadly need of the moment was for doughty deeds—an age without a thought, hence such paucity of works!

There are Bible commentaries without originality (composed almost entirely of quotations from the Fathers), sacred legends, colourless translations of existing fragments, and sermons such as those of Abbo of St. Germain and of Odo, written in uncouth, barbaric Latin, bristling with curses against the spoilers of the Church and the general wickedness. There are attempts in epic poetry and satire; a poem called *The Bald*, the triumph of Hucbald, a masterpiece in an elaborate but light style; some rather remarkable verses of Gerbert in honour of Boethius, and other works whose only value is their rarity as documents. The Latin peoples had nothing else to refresh their minds during the upheaval.

We have just mentioned the monk and archbishop, Gerbert, who became later on Pope Sylvester II. He alone stands out boldly against the grey horizon of his time. His was a strange personality, the cleverest and most distinguished of the tenth century; he was a scholar, statesman, enlightened and possibly sceptical pontiff. His contemporaries, in their difficulty to understand such marked ability in so barbarous a period, were forced to regard and fear him as a sorcerer.

§ 3.

Once more the night of ignorance grew darker. Ancient learning was not, however, completely forgotten. Gerbert had in his library Cicero, Cæsar, Pliny, Suetonius, Statius, Demosthenes, Manilius, Claudian and Boethius; Flodoard drew his inspiration from Livy, Sallust, Virgil, Cæsar,

[1] It was the same everywhere. Zamora says in his *General Chronicle of Spain*: "At this time kings, counts, nobles, and knights kept their horses in the rooms where they slept, in order to be ready at any moment."

Eutropius, and Œlius. Gonzon, while lecturing on some point of prosody, would refer to Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Terence, Horace, Virgil, Statius, and a dozen others. But books became rare or disappeared; purely Latin scholarship was much restricted. Greek ceased to be studied and to be understood. Learning was at its ebb, and consisted practically of little else than works of patrology.

The Eastern Empire, isolated by language and by institutions and by the division of the Churches, had but the slightest intercourse with the nations of Western Europe. This unhappy Byzantine Empire fell to pieces, a prey to religious agitation and internal discord.[1] In the same way that recently the successful schism of Photius[2] preceded the great division of the Christian Church into two antagonistic camps, the accession of the Macedonian dynasty to the unstable throne of Byzantium was, by reason of its consequences, an event of supreme importance.

In Spain classical and ecclesiastical studies dwindled and finally disappeared in the turmoil of the Moorish conquest. These, however, brought with them civilisation and arts on a higher level of development. One can cite a bishop who composed *Kasida*—that is to say, Arab songs. Alvarus of Cordova bitterly reproached his compatriots for preferring Arabian to Christian learning, for lacking knowledge of their

[1] We must note, however, that classical tradition was still honoured in Byzantine literature. The latter exercised an influence, as yet but insufficiently studied, on an important branch of letters during the Middle Ages. Already in the preceding century Photius, together with Michael the Stammerer, aided by Theodorus Studita, and by George Syncellus, had brought about a revival of Hellenism. The Emperors Leo the philosopher, Nicephorus, Phocas, and Basil II. prolonged its results. Under the last-named cruel prince appear Leo Diaconus, George Cedrenos, John Xiphilin, and Suidas.

[2] Photius, banished twice from the patriarchal See of Constantinople and anathematised by Nicholas I., assembled the Œcumenical Council in 858, and persuaded the bishops to withdraw from the Roman communion. Those who accepted his propositions founded the Eastern Church.

own religion and language while hungrily seeking the melody and elegance of Mussulman rhetoric. Nevertheless they could not do otherwise.

The Western nations had to a great extent deprived themselves of their inheritance of the ancient world. They were forced, however, to retrace their steps to Eastern schools, and to re-acquire as pupils an education which invading barbarism had so imperilled. To Arab civilisation must be given the honour of having saved the small stream of knowledge then extant from drying up completely, and furthermore of increasing, purifying, and renewing it.

CHAPTER IX

Contrast between this general absence of culture and the brilliant state of learning in Asia—Even in the extreme East—China, Japan, the land of the Khmers, and Persia in the tenth century—Arab learning from the eighth century onwards—View of this civilisation—Introduction of Arab books to the West.

§ 1.

The tenth century, which has been called the Iron Age of Europe by reason of the disasters, calamities, and terrible distress which, like a funeral procession, accompanied it in the Western countries and in the Byzantine Empire—this same tenth century produced a brilliant intellectual epoch for the greater part of the East, not only among the Arabs, but in the most isolated regions of the Asiatic continent.

China, to which one's thoughts from time to time necessarily travel, had just enjoyed a superb poetic harvest under the Thangs, due to Le-Tai-pih, the melancholy dreamer, intellectual kinsman, and precursor of the Persians Khayyam and Hafiz. He constitutes the chief ornament of the reign of the Emperor Hiouan-Tseng, and was called by some the "Exiled immortal on earth."[1] Next comes Thou-Fou, the

[1] Le-Tai-pih, who was also justly called the *Blue Nenuphar*, was the descendant in the ninth generation of the Emperor Wou-ti, of the Siang dynasty. After his death a temple was erected to his memory, bearing this epitaph :—

"Glory to Le-Tai-pih, the exiled immortal on earth ! In song and over the wine-bowl, there lay his life-work. His poetry flourished throughout the Empire like a waxing moon. Say not, therefore, that the works of a poet of genius pass away and are lost, for this brilliant moon is still suspended over the banks of the River Tsay-thy !"

Horace of his country, talented singer of youth and spring, of forests and of mountains, of the joys of wine, of poetic contests, walks and contemplation ; then follow their rivals, Wang-Wey and Lo-Ping-Wang. Next, under the Soungs, literature flourished exceedingly.

Competitions had never been so honoured nor scholars so favoured. This forms one of the most interesting and striking of all literatures. No other was developed so entirely apart from Western literary influences ; no other evinces so little trace of a mutual interchange of ideas with Western peoples. Yet there is none which presents a more striking resemblance with our own as regards the presentation of vivid types, the observation of manners and ordinary daily life in its reality.

The intellectual awakening was not less real in Japan, or rather, it prolonged with a new brilliance the enlightened period just completed.[1] In its refinement of language, in the studied elaboration of its social and in the luxury of its material life the Japanese court of the tenth century equalled the most perfect and dazzling court we have ever known in Europe. Invested with a sovereign authority, which no cloud overshadowed, the emperor reigned tranquilly amidst his nobles, scholars, and artists. A profound peace encouraged intellectual pleasures. There existed between the princes and the authors they patronised a gentle emulation to maintain a perfect balance between the claims of rank and the brilliance of talent. Poetry was an essential part of the education of the well-born ; in their elegant conversations verses flowed from their lips embellished with metaphors and graceful comparisons, which Tsurayuki[2] might have owned.

Artists, painters, and sculptors, educated in Chinese

[1] Japanese encyclopædias bear witness to a considerable number of authors in the ninth century, among others to the poetess Ono-no-Komati.

[2] Born 884, died 946.

schools, vied with each other in depicting with great delicacy the various productions of Oriental nature. From the seventh century to the ninth, when Kous-Koa was supreme in matters æsthetic, they lavished their skill and knowledge on the practice of art. In the tenth century no subject was discussed with such enthusiasm in court circles as the question of the brilliant Chinese style, which was reflected in a great number of valuable *kakimonos*.[1] For the Japanese were then, as now, most apt to assimilate advantages of surrounding civilisations without losing their own racial qualities. They invited the Chinese to bring them their enamel work, ivory and wood carving; and summoned the Persians, who taught them to produce iron-work inlaid with designs in gold and silver. They, however, improved on the art of their teachers, first acquiring from them the elements of skilful grace and solidity, then surpassing them in beauty of colour and in vividness of design.

Their literature, although pedantic and somewhat artificial, was pure. The language was not affected by the mixture of Chinese, and authors, though yielding to conscious affectations, possessed an art, which they have never lost, of giving a happy turn to their most insignificant thoughts. Such was the Golden Age of the Japanese which the illustrious Mourasaki[2] has depicted so realistically, and which lapse of time and the charms of Oriental colouring render still more attractive.

This period was, unfortunately, only too brief. The brutality of the feudal system, roughly imposed upon the country, banished arts and literature for seven hundred years.

[1] The *kakimono*, or fabric, is a design on silk mounted on chequer-paper, and capable of being rolled round a cylinder. Every Japanese house of sufficient dimensions possesses or possessed a special cabinet, or *takomana*, as receptacle for the *kakimonos*, which vary in number and quality according to the wealth of the owner.

[2] The romance-writer Mourasaki Shikibou. Her novel *Genji* ranks among the masterpieces of the national literature.

We find, even as far away as Indo-China, remarkable traces of this state of culture. Cambodia was at the height of prosperity in the tenth century, and dominated almost the whole peninsula. For many years it had been of great importance. Before the seventh century, when the introduction of Buddhist books from Ceylon brought about the downfall of Brahmanism in the empire, the Khmers boasted of possessing innumerable and magnificent examples of art from Pnan, on the Mekong, in Laos, to Thap-Muir, and from Qui-Nhon to Sam-Reap.[1] Angkor,[2] the great and the holy, lay buried in trackless and mysterious forests, and raised skywards, like a cyclopean vegetation, her embattled and majestic temple gates, triumphal arches and gigantic statues, and that extraordinary collection of architecture, the ruins of which seem marvellous to explorers in so remote a country. The elaboration of Cambodian monuments, in which enormous blocks of stone were as finely wrought as gold, has become proverbial among the Asiatics of the Far East. They used to say in China, "As rich as Tchin-la."

Persia contemporaneously attained the height of her moral development. From the blending of the Iranian with the Mussulman and Semitic races sprang a new language. The ancient traditions of the Kingdom of Bactria had assumed the form of a grandiose epopee in the hands of Firdousi, the creator of the *Shah-Nameh* (Book of Kings). He was a Mahometan by birth and belonged to the conquering race, but he was inspired by the early Iranian ideals, and for sixty years he sang its praises. By his genius, his large output and imagination, his deep knowledge of ancient history of his native land, its religion and language, he was indeed

[1] Concerning the civilisation of the Khmers, consult the works of Mouchot, Lagree, F. Garnier, Delaporte, Aymonier, Moura, Pavie, Gaston Donnet, &c.

[2] The artist Pang, describing Angkor, says: "He who contemplates these monuments of the Khmers is transported to august perfection."

the Homer of the East. India possesses the *Mahâbhârata ;* Greece, the *Iliad ;* the Middle Ages, the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Chanson de Roland ;* Persia, the *Book of Kings*, that is to say, one of the most distinguished monuments in the realm of letters.

§ 2.

By way of Persia, and by the theory of her moral ascendancy over her Mussulman conquerors,[1] we return to our starting-point—Arab civilisation, so flourishing from the eighth century, and of which we temporarily lost sight.

The climatic influence in lands blest with sunshine, where physical wants are easily supplied, and man is able to devote himself in bodily comfort to contemplation, results in a more exquisite susceptibility. The taste for concise, well-balanced expressions, more adapted to reflect the transport of the soul and senses than the language of every-day life, further fostered in the Arabs a love of poetry. Was this not, together with music, the only form of art convenient to nomad shepherds as to the ancient Aryans and Hebrews? Long before Mahomet they had their "contests for fame," as they called the compositions of the *Kaaba.* In the shade of this temple, built on the spot where Adam lived (the first man, according to Genesis), the most celebrated in the art of eloquence strove ardently and zealously for the prizes. There, as in ancient Greece, intellectual achievements were crowned. It was only, however, from the end of the fifth century, when Mohalhil composed the first *Kasida*, that they possessed any continuous poems. The language was fully developed since the beginning of the sixth century, with

[1] The celebrated French writer, Ernest Renan, developed the theory that Arab genius under the Abbassides produced nothing original, and their jurisprudence, for example, owed its best qualities to Persian emigrants and Iranian scribes. Other critics deeply versed in the knowledge of the Islam world have opposed this view, and to combat it cited the metaphysics of the imaun Azam—an admirable system, but very different from Aristotle's metaphysics.

the result that the dawn of Arabian literature, by reason of its sudden maturity, was accompanied by its "golden age." The effects of nature, the passions of man, the concerns and rivalries of tribes, their wandering life on well-loved steeds, are all boldly described in *Muallakat*. Antar was wont to celebrate in song, to the applause of his brothers-in-arms, assembled in his tent after the battle, their warlike spirit, his own victories, and the charms of his well-beloved. It was the happy time when dogma was unknown—*El Djahiliah*. Lyricism, which was shortly to divide the ingenious classification of Abou-Tamam into ten different sources of inspiration, exerted its single influence upon the Arab imagination. These enthusiastic but ignorant nations had no other learning for many years but poetry. A new period of a religious and proselytising character was opened by the coming of Mahomet—a literary interregnum, full of victorious action, which the Arabs called *Mohadran*. When he died on 8th June, 632, religious unity in Arabia had, so to speak, been accomplished. The Koran remained as a classic model of the language which it had helped to fix, an inexhaustible text and boundless source of expositions and commentaries.

From the Hegira to the Abbassides was a period marked by the existence of grammarians, commentators of the Sacred Book, authors of sermons and prayers, and jurists. Mussulman law had been firmly established in all its divisions by successive additions, and was destined to finally retain in its voluminous records a unity of formed idea henceforth invariable.[1] Under the Ommiade caliphs (Yazid, Abd-al-

[1] Legislative learning was highly in favour in Islamitic countries, with the rigorous and almost changeless hierarchy of their authority. Four jurisconsults deserve the name of creators of legislation: the imaun Numan, head of the Hanefite School, called the "Master of masters," the "Great master," whose doctrine especially flourished in the Ottoman Empire; the imaun Malik, head of the Malikite School, who claimed the Sanite Towns, the Yemen, Tripoli, and the North of Africa; thirdly, the imaun Chafi, Idris Ebon-Abd-Oullah, head of the Chafite School, of which

Melik, Hishám) good poetry had been written. Then began the glorious era of the Abbassides, compared with which even that of the Sarsanides is colourless. Whilst the West was groaning under the heavy hand of feudalism we find at Baghdad a wonderful combination of polished manners and literary culture. The period between the accession of Almansur, founder of Baghdad, and the assassination of Motawakkel (754–861), has left an idea of splendour and of prosperity unique of its kind. This impression was due to intellectual freedom, graceful licence, and exquisite manners, even among those who dispensed favours. A work worthy of perusal is the *Golden Fields*, by the clever painter and indiscreet chronicler, the Tallemant des Réaux of the Arabs (with more than his knowledge and philosophy), whose name was Musa'oodee.[1] We then understand the charm surrounding the pleasures of life at that time. People took supreme delight in conversation, in which they displayed such taste and intellectuality hitherto unknown in the Eastern World. The theory of art was developed to the utmost. The noble and unfettered style of the poets, who were the glory of the court ; their sentiments refined to the degree of appearing slightly pedantic, the justness of their ideas and

Egypt is the most active centre ; lastly, the imaun Hambeli, Ahmed-ben-Hambel, who died a martyr's death rather than deny the eternal nature of the Koran, and whose school, the Hambelite School, prevails in Morocco, and counts numerous followers in Java. The jurisconsults of Islam are all characterised by one mark—their excessive love of subtlety. Stamboul in this respect has not discredited Byzantium. (Cf. Sawas-Pacha, *Studies on the Theory of Mussulman Law*, 1892).

[1] The French translation is by Barbier de Maynard, 7 vols. 8vo. The *Golden Fields* of Musa'oodee was written in 332 of the Hegira (944 A.D.). Although this collection is only a continuation of works unfortunately lost, despite its lacunæ, its faults, and a total lack of order and classification, it is the most instructive book of Arab polygraphy. The attention is always fixed by the charming ease of its tone, and by the taste and delicacy exhibited in details. Musa'oodee a scholar, savant, and man of letters, gives to history all the attractions of fiction ; in this way he binds together his disconnected narratives.

the delicacy of their conceptions, all constituted a source of delight to Arab society. In contemplating these brilliant personages, the mind, so to speak, wanders far from Arabia, and seems to be once more among the contemporaries of Pericles and Augustus, despite the profound differences which separated Arab poetry from that of Greece and Rome.

Illustrious patrons, such as Harun el Rashid, Al-Mamun, Al Hakem II., were to the poets of the East what Leo X. and Louis XIV. were to those of Italy and France.

Similarly Moorish princes and the Emirs in Spain spared no pains in beautifying the land which they had conquered. They made Cordova the rival of Mecca ; a new and luxurious capital of Islam. It had already become the literary capital on the decline of Baghdad and Damascus, caused by the frequent migration of the Caliphs. It was their holy city, the dwelling-place of their kings, scholars, and priests. Students came from all parts to follow the instruction of the ulemas and doctors. Artists built up with loving hands that marvellous forest of jasper, porphyry, and marble—the Alhambra, the most precious jewel of Arab architecture. At Toledo and Granada they loaded their mosques and monuments with splendour. Poetry and art were cultivated everywhere in peace and abundance.

In less than two centuries the fanatic disciples of Mahomet and the supposed incendiaries of the Alexandrian library had been completely transformed. Between 742 and 846 we see this civilisation developing with exceeding rapidity, and in spite of the dismemberment of the Caliphate of Baghdad, was destined to continue till the invasion of the Turks, 1258. Medicine and astronomy flourished in the universities of Alexandria, of Cufa, and Baghdad. It was then that the principal philosophical and scientific works of the Syrians, Persians, Copts, Hindoos, and above all of the Greeks, were translated into Arabic. Great philosophers, mathematicians, astronomers, and alchemists obtained

tangible results of great importance,[1] the outcome of their mystical and abstract researches ; grammarians, doctors, and historians appeared among the Arabs. An ardent love of knowledge sprang up ; they studied everything. While with the Byzantines theology stifled science, and the Latins reduced the whole art of healing to a system of curing by miracles, superstitious practices, or the handling of relics, the Arabs were developing their medical studies on a solid basis, which they derived from the Greeks and Alexandrians. Their teachers were Nestorians and Jews ; in Asia they had been influenced by the former, in Africa by the latter. The point of common contact was the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead.

The Jews indeed had possessed for some years distinguished medical men, who were sought for by kings, high officials, and even by the princes of the Church. The disciples of Nestorius, almost from the beginning, devoted themselves to the study of the structure and the diseases of the human body.

Following their expulsion from Constantinople by Theodosius the Younger, by reason of the violent intrigues of Cyril and the Egyptian party (who prevailed at the Council of Ephesus), they had founded the Chaldean School, instituted the College of Edessa, and inaugurated several centres of study. Vast libraries arose in Asia ; the works of Aristotle, Pliny the Elder, and a number of other Greek and Latin authors were then translated into Syriac. The Saracens obtained from them splendid results, which the whole human family enjoyed in its age of reason. The latter revived experimental science, but under strange forms in which the influence of magic was too prominent.

There have been few more important events in literary history than the translation from Greek and Syriac into Arabic of Grecian philosophy and learning. This was accomplished, from the end of the tenth to the twelfth centuries,

[1] *E.g.*, strong acids and automatic fire.

under the patronage of the caliphs. Literary Europe made the acquaintance of the most authoritative writings in every branch of learning owing to these efforts. The originals, however, were not forthcoming till the great Renaissance. The Arabs provided in their encyclopædias and their numerous versions of Greek works on medicine and natural science, a means for preserving a number of ideas, which, but for them, would have been lost. They will now never be forgotten. This incomplete civilisation, shining but for a moment, was soon to be extinguished. Yet by reason of the light it had spread, it had done noble work for the rest of the world. A new era was about to open with a more forcible and permanent civilisation. It plunged this civilisation into the scholastic movement. This was one of the characteristics of the Middle Ages, and, despite its considerable defects, its exclusiveness paved the way to modern times.

CHAPTER X

The nationalities and languages of Europe are formed—Dogma dominates the world—Early struggles of popular and national poetry to be free of it—Rise of the songs in praise of heroic action (*chansons de geste*) —These unconsciously give place to sentimental tales of adventure and chivalry—Cycle of the Round Table—Its origin—The tales of the Round Table exert extraordinary influence on the æsthetic ideas of rising European literatures and on the general outlook.

§ 1.

Up to the point at which we have now arrived the progress of the chief European groups, and of their institutions and ideas, has been extremely slow. It is with difficulty that we emerge from the Roman and barbarian fusion ; the evolution appears insensible, but it nevertheless exists.

The old world witnessed day by day the gradual diminution of the territory it had conquered. The artificial unification, which Charlemagne's genius had succeeded in achieving when he reconstructed the Roman Empire with barbaric elements, was dashed into a thousand pieces. Nothing remained but a nameless blending of hostile tribes, a dissolution of races, an incoherent friction between groups seeking to establish themselves firmly. From this blend at long intervals were to emerge other unions and more homogeneous combinations ; the European peoples of to-day were to issue thence with their different dispositions, characteristics, and destiny. This period of disorder and convulsion, which lasted from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, and to which we must return for a moment, constituted the painful but

certain passage to their destined future. The events which took place, the decline of the Empire and of the House of Charlemagne, the anarchy which preceded the organisation of feudalism, and the subjection which the Church had to suffer before finally breaking free in the eleventh century—all bear witness to a slow evolution towards modern times.

By one of those strange contrasts which history teaches us to see, the Saxon emperors became themselves the military protectors of Christian society, and were the descendants of the very people on whom Charlemagne a few years earlier had imposed Christianity by force of arms.

In the North we see coming into prominence peoples who later on were to take part in the transactions of the vast European family. The Hungarian, Polish, Russian, and Scandinavian share in the movements of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries presents one of the most interesting aspects of mediæval history.

England passed through strange alternatives of liberty and servitude before attaining independent nationality: the conflicts between the Dane and Saxon and afterwards the arbitrary intervention of the Normans, who, crushing the indigenous elements, made one and all submit to their supremacy. Such was the troublous origin of a people with a magnificent future.

At length the Christians in Spain regained by the sword from the sons of Islam their independence, their faith, and their country, and founded a nation in the peninsula during the struggles of incessant warfare.

Thought does not remain quite inactive while this evolution effects a transformation and is proceeding under the crush of nations. Art makes faint beginnings and mental life wakes or is awakened, restrained, however, even subordinated, by a power that is absolute; that is to say, by theology, which dominates all knowledge and moral principles. The imagination of men, although almost encircled by religious theory

and confined by its half-learned, half-savage precautions, has its moments of action, but it knows only one source of strength—faith. Yet the movement is continuous. The imagination has scarcely a faint memory of pagan literature, that wonderful source of inspiration. It reflects, explains, and comments on the prevailing faith, the examples of blind fervour, which at least bridle the too fierce passions; on the actions of clerics and lords; the rewards and penalties of the world to come. This minimum of nourishment is adequate for the imagination until a spontaneous and popular literature springs up, capable of meeting other needs and of satisfying other aspirations. It does not reveal itself in powerful works, but is at least of an active and civilising nature. In the latter *rôle* it shares in the triumph of the spiritual power which guides and rules men's souls. The Church and the Papacy had arrived at the summit of a greatness which they deemed unshakeable. Christianity rebuilt a new hieratical edifice, of which sacerdotalism was the keystone, with the ruins of an earlier civilisation.

The mysterious Romanesque architecture issuing from the ruins of ancient architecture reveals to the eye the rigour of this domination and the indubitable correctness of this theory. We find on all hands in the stonework of the cathedrals, as on the leaves of manuscripts, the constant mark of sacerdotal intervention.

Dogma reigns supreme and permits no rivals; conscience knows no other regulator and appetite no other boundary to its gratification. In peaceful days, free from peril of war or fear of invasions and consequent devastations, the stream of Christian piety flows on unchecked and boundless; but it is the piety of the Middle Ages, alternately brutal and afraid, cruelly proud or deeply humble.

It is then we see them, a priest-ridden people, some in the still retirement of religious houses lost in meditation or in prayer, suffering, raving perhaps, in the dim light of the

painted windows, eloquent of the Divine Life and Passion; a people of friars and monks, harassed by endless scruples and tortured by their own idea of the love of God. They were in a constant state of exaltation by their custom of meditating on the ineffable, and their souls were beguiled by mystical pains and delights or by the troubles and uncertainties of a vague, incurable melancholy which they named "acedia." Fasting, scourging, prayer, or ecstasy produced a constant excitement. Shut in by the impregnable circle of their own ideas as in a narrow prison, these holy recluses spent their lives seeking, in the world of exile, distant views of the heavenly kingdom. They saw the path of men beset with baited ambush, the peril of deadly sin, occasions of fall, temptations of the Evil One, and Satan and his wiles became an obsession that crushed them. They determined that laymen should share the perils that beset them by day and the terrors that shook them by night. The eagerness of the men of this period to convert their fellows was unparalleled. Books of wisdom for the conduct of the soul, of direction for the daily life, were to be found of every kind, and to suit all tastes. Works on pure dogma, commentaries on the law, lives of the saints, legends, collections of maxims borrowed from pagan philosophy, veneered with Christianity, allegories, "mirrors," apologies or treatises of interpretative learning, all led to the same end. Clergy and laity vied with each other in their eagerness to gain the heavenly rewards. Matter in any form, whether animate or inanimate, served to symbolise the state of the human soul, and its virtues and vices,[1] if not already employed to personify the Church itself or Jesus Christ. Every external manifestation of nature was transformed into a subject for religious consideration and commentary. In spite of so inexhaustible a source, the preachers themselves did not always rise higher in deed than the congregations whom they exhorted so warmly in words.

[1] See in particular the *Physiologus* and the curious *Bestiaries* of Philippe de Thaon and of William of Normandy.

§ 2.

If, however, the aims of this constant preaching sufficed for the public or private moral teaching of the time, it did not finally and exclusively still the curiosity of men's minds, affording as it did instruction but neither refreshment nor pleasure.

At length the early signs of a national poetry were noticed. The various peoples endeavoured to handle this means of expression with quite primitive ingenuity. It came to them from the land of the "Trouvères" and "Troubadours."

It was during the great excitement caused by the Crusades, which aroused at the same time chivalrous bravery and religious enthusiasm, that inspiration became general, and words suddenly became living symbols. Preceded by a long series of *Cantilenæ*, a rough and naïve epic poetry appears. This offers practically nothing as aids to the memory of the singers, who would recite it in hundreds of places, except the simplicity of the metre intensified by the regular return of the assonance.[1] But it was essentially heroic, and the absolutely faithful mirror of the modes of life and thought of the feudal aristocracy. The substance of the *Chansons de geste*[2] (songs of chivalry) appeared in France under the Merovingians, and having been considerably developed under Charlemagne, Charles the Bald, and their immediate successors, had now attained its final form.

We notice in the first or Carolingian cycle a strong patriotism, a fierce and warlike spirit, descriptions of armies and of single combats, epithets drawn from nature, the supernatural throughout, but nothing of the comic or of parody. Towards the end of the eleventh century appeared the *Song of Roland*, the first of a long series of *Chansons de*

[1] The type of these narrative poems of the Merovingian epoch is shown in the famous *Song of S. Faron*, seventh century, preserved by Helgaire, Bishop of Meaux.

[2] See important works of erudite French and German contemporaries, especially of Gaston Paris on the origin of the *Chansons de geste*.

geste. This is the oldest and at the same time the most highly elaborated specimen. Its central figure, Roland, the French Achilles, a semi-historical hero and alleged nephew of Charlemagne, was destined henceforth to occupy an infinitely more important place in the domain of legend than he did in the world of reality. He invades every Christian language and literature. This ubiquity of his name is all the more extraordinary as we know scarcely anything authentic about the real man.

"Thus," says Edouard Rod, "whilst scholars, monks, and clergy endeavoured to express their thoughts in antiquated style and in semi-barbaric Latin, a very different literature on other models was being gradually built up outside the recognised centres of culture.[1] During the first half of the twelfth century, the *Chanson de geste* is the most usual form of expression, draws a universal audience and touches all hearts. In castle halls, before the barons resting from combats or before crowded assemblies, the singers and minstrels accompany themselves on the rota (harp) or viol, and chant the prowess of Roland, of Oliver, of Aimeri, of Narbonne, of the proud marquis, William of Orange, and of the great emperor and his paladins.

Although deficient as works of art, and possessing little individuality of style, these epics exercised a very great influence on the people. They are filled with the spirit of chivalry, and the characters are living and real, if not always very sympathetic to us in the brutality of their manners. No such perfect expression of popular feeling could have been found elsewhere, for they are absolutely in harmony

[1] It is only just to recognise, however, that the Latinity of the twelfth century had made considerable progress on that of the preceding ages. In different parts of Europe many writers were distinguished by a richer and more elegant style. This they owed to a more intimate knowledge of the real classics. Such were John of Salisbury, William of Malmesbury, and Gerard the Cambrian, in England; Otho of Freisingen and Saxo Grammaticus, in Germany; and Falcandus, the historian of Sicily, in Italy.

with the somewhat savage spirit of the times in which they were produced.

However, the epic never altered its primitive form of setting. The motives which prompt men to action were as restricted as in the ancient Greek epic. Nothing was known of the life of the forests, of mystic adventures, of intimate communion with Nature, nor of the delicate refinements of love, nor yet of that captivation of the imagination which unceasingly impels the hero to pursue the unknown. Nothing of all this was known when the Tales of the Round Table were produced. The effect was marvellous ; tales and legends founded on the local traditions of a half-conquered race (a small people completely isolated from the world) spread with extraordinary rapidity, and almost immediately modified the poetry of Europe. A complete revolution took place in the expression of sentiments, as well as in the conception and employment of the supernatural.

The *Chansons de geste* having gradually degenerated, were superseded by brilliant descriptions of lovers' trials, courtly contests, and strange adventures. The rough companions of Charles Martel, of Pepin, of Charlemagne—for instance, Garin, William of Orange, Ogier, and Roland—were replaced by the mysterious prophet Merlin, son of sylph and vestal ; by languishing Lancelot of the Lake ; by the luckless Tristan and the voluptuous Gauvaine. The fierce and passionate heroines of primitive epics, Lydia, Blanchefleur, Guibourc and Orable, disappeared before the gentler beauties of the Arthurian cycle—Isolde, Guinevere, Enid, and Vivien. Tristan and Isolde, especially so symbolical of the bardic period, had become the romantic types of love. But a few years had passed before this literature, a strange mixture of the most widely opposed elements, of Christian ideas and the marvels of the East, of Germanic adventures and the traditions of Wales, had deprived the masses of all traces of national poetry. Arthur and Merlin triumphed—

"Ogier and Charlemagne are dead."

The rapid diffusion of Arthurian legends completely changed the bias of men's ideas; the Carolingian cycle vanished. Woman and Love entirely overthrew the ancient epic system. Common and well-worn topics were neglected, and such subjects of primitive poetical art as the war-horse, the sword, the traitor, and the Saracen[1] were relegated to oblivion. The voluminous descriptions of battles, the series of interminable single combats, were replaced by the fantastic variations of the tales of adventure. Inspiration itself became gentler, and the characters themselves more human.

The praise of love acquired considerable importance in literature and society, and influenced the imaginations of all.

In Southern France the Troubadours plunged into lyricism; their souls glowed with enthusiasm to the point of insanity. They became almost hysterical in their enthusiasm. Women bestowed their favours on those who sang their praises in bursts of poetic eloquence, and the Troubadours proclaimed themselves to be the more fortunate rivals of princes. In Northern France the Trouvères set themselves to celebrate the tournaments, the delights of love, the pleasures of life, and the charms of their lady-love.

A remarkable refinement now appears in moral and religious ideas and in social customs. This, increasing from day to day, developed into a strange mysticism. Hitherto Woman had been kept strictly in the background, and Man reigned as absolute monarch without an equal. Now Woman comes to the fore, acts and speaks, makes her influence felt, and predominates everywhere. Those who would right wrongs yield to her moral power; they pledge their faith to her and take their oath on bended knee, hands clasped in hands as in feudal homage.

[1] See the early *Chansons de geste*—for example, the group of *Garin de Loherain*. It tells only of cleft helmets and broken heads. The knights fall upon and kill each other at sight; a private quarrel is sufficient to arm whole troops of men and to bring about most sanguinary conflicts.

Formerly she had been regarded as an inferior being, full of vanity and inconstancy. "It was through her that sin first entered the world," said these rugged knights; "it is through her the human race lives in pain and suffering." They only granted her protection from the compassion due to the weak. Now she was almost regarded as holy. All women were included in the worship of the Mother of God; their wishes became law, their words commands. The Carolingian barons exhausted their passion in sensual satisfaction in the perpetuation of the human race, knowing no higher side of love. None of the characters of the Arthurian cycle believed it possible to have too pure or too metaphysical an idea of love, "that subtle and sacred thing," as Chrestien de Troyes called it, and the same idea prevailed in Italy, in Provence, in England, as well as in Northern France.

In pursuit of the ideal and cult of the symbol, the inquiry for the remote end of art, and the taste for minute and elaborate analysis, became universal. A number of fresh sentiments and intellectual habits, the existence of which had not been suspected up till then, invaded the minds of the romance-writers, and poetry, which was languishing, once more revived.

§ 3.

France gained from this an increased influence, which in turn benefited other nations. She, in fact, became the moral standard of Europe. She had already manifested her own originality and poetic richness by the *Chansons de geste* and the heroic tales; in philosophy by the fervour of her scholasticism, originally borrowed from Arab schools and adapted by the Irishman, Scotus Erigena, to the Christian system; in architecture by her masterpieces of Gothic style, in politics by her municipal organisation; abroad by her enthusiastic support of the Crusades. Her history was, in fact, the history of humanity in the West. In this lofty position was France at the end of the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER XI

General aspect of the thirteenth century—Essential unity of literatures in the initial stages—Simultaneous development of letters and arts in France, England, Germany, and among the peoples of Southern Europe—"Trouvères" and "Troubadours"—Anglo-Saxon minstrels—German "Minne singers"—Popular poetry shakes off the predominance of ecclesiasticism and feudal abuses.

§ 1.

We have now arrived at the commencement of the twelfth century. The greater part of Europe was in a general state of preparation, which proves in a marked degree the common inspiration of these young literatures.

Living languages have acquired force and stability. The Anglo-Saxons, it is true, have not yet thrown off the Norman yoke. When England was divided among the followers of William the Conqueror the laws they passed were written in Norman French.[1] There were doubtless revolts against this at the instigation of certain national chiefs who, sheltering themselves in woods or marsh lands, carried on the fight for liberty, and temporarily got the upper hand of their conquerors. Following their example in the shadow of cloistered retreats or beneath rustic roofs, lovers of deeply rooted tradition preserved the speech of the country and kept it alive in scattered chronicles, isolated songs, and

[1] Before these two tongues and peoples were at last blended the archives of England were filled with French manuscripts. In Robert of Gloucester we find a remarkable passage, which proves that in his time, that is about 1276, French was still the language of the upper classes.

ballads. Further, the people rebelling against Norman culture as it had revolted against Roman, continued speaking Saxon, though all the rich and powerful held themselves scornfully aloof from it. Minstrels followed in the steps of the conquerors, but they brought only dim reflections and imitations of the poetry of the "Trouvères." Anglo-Saxon was destined to wait for an individual existence until the advent of Chaucer. On the other hand, the progress of Middle High German at the most brilliant Suabian period bears witness to the transformation of taste, ideas, and language. In Italy the Tuscan idiom is produced for purely literary purposes. Spain employs a vocabulary still in a state of confusion for spontaneously translating generous sentiments, noble and lofty thoughts, and struggles to express by means of it general ideas of a vague character. The earliest Danish documents also date from this period. Swedish literature starts with imitations of the tales of chivalry. The Slavs would have continued to reproduce in the old Slavonic form (which Cyril and Methodus used in the ninth century), the liturgical inspirations of Byzantium, had not the Mongol invasion brusquely checked them in the early beginnings of their intellectual and social development.

As for France, her language is heard everywhere; witness her name and marks of her power in Syria, Armenia, Cyprus, at Constantinople, Athens and Naples, and in Navarre and Hungary. One of our most reliable historians felt justified in saying that in the thirteenth century one could travel from Paris to Jerusalem without, so to speak, quitting French territory.

Almost all European languages began simultaneously to give evidence of permanent qualities. Translations of the Bible and State documents were written in modern languages for the first time, and bore witness to constant progress. History framed its own prose. Latin chronicles, designed for scholars, and which also possessed an eloquence of their own, and beauties unknown to classical Latin were

now superseded by chronicles drawn up for the people. Geoffroy de Villehardouin, earliest of French prose-writers, whose work closely resembles the tales of chivalry in tone, affords a memorable example.

A great many *résumés* and encyclopædias followed, proving by their number the need which the Middle Ages felt to review exactly and completely the extent of their knowledge in all departments. Already the troubadour Pierre de Corbiac had compiled *The Treasure*, a simple work which contained a condensed account of all his knowledge. Under the same title Brunetto Latini, a Florentine, Dante's master, an orator, poet, statesman, historian, philosopher, and theologian wished to translate from a more intricate language into "langue d'oil" (dialect of Northern France), the Latin compilation of the Dominican Vincent of Beauvais, the eminent Vincentius Bellovacensis, who has been called the Pliny of the Middle Ages.[1] Similarly under one or another form the most eminent men offered the fruits of their extensive labours to the age in which they lived. Such were Albert the Great, who introduced Aristotelian philosophy and works on natural science[2] to Europe; Alexander Hales who gained in the schools the title of the "irrefragable doctor"; Thomas Aquinas, whose treatises on the syllogism, demonstrations and sophisms, constituted an abstract of the whole of Aristotle's *Dialectics;* finally, Henry of Susa, William of Auvergne, and Roger Bacon.

Jurisprudence, studied with an equally encyclopædic ardour, was completely revised. Moreover, there were some very

[1] Besides the undoubtedly valuable collection of documents which are now only found in this compilation, the *Speculum Majus* of Vincent of Beauvais (Strasburg, 1473, ten vols. in fol.) is the vast summary of all the learning of the age, although dealing chiefly with the past; despite its inevitable errors it casts a vivid light on the future.

[2] He had contemplated writing it in Latin. Albert the master showed himself in many subjects so far superior to his contemporaries that his fate was that of Gerbert in the tenth century; he was looked on as a worker of miracles, and in popular opinion nothing short of a magician.

enlightened pontiffs, Innocent III., Gregory IX., and Boniface VIII., who, being fascinated by the rights and duties of governments, remodelled the articles of canonical law in accordance with the ideas and requirements of contemporary society. They made laws and put them into execution, legislated and sat as judges, setting up the example of absolute jurisdiction. They published vast legal codes and founded law schools. Further, these are the origins of the national legislations which were evolved, expressed in the languages of the various nations, and served as models, protection or guarantee to each individual. The famous *Mirrors* of Suabia and Saxony, which are the first laws published in German under Frederick II., the *Etablissements* of St Louis, the French version of the *Assizes of Jerusalem*, the important collections of Pierre de Fontaines or Philippe de Beaumanoir, all embrace in their archives the most accurate documentary evidence of the old Catholic and feudal organisation.

Side by side with purely intellectual or social learning, active experiment begins to free itself from popular errors and superstitious practices. Advancing considerably on the ideas of his epoch, the English monk Roger Bacon[1] possessed intuitively a vast amount of knowledge which then seemed an impenetrable mystery, but which has since been solved. The schools of Montpellier and Salerno, heirs of Græco-Arabic learning, continued famous in the experimental demonstration of medicine. Finally, the introduction of algebra, Arabic numerals, and the general use of the compass must be reckoned as valuable additions to the results attained in the progress of humanity.

It was in order to develop the higher faculties that the greatest scholastic efforts, particularly in theology, were made. Theology, by withholding all liberty to analyse important questions and by proclaiming herself to be the

[1] The complete works of Roger Bacon form the most noteworthy scientific achievement of the Middle Ages.

guardian of absolute truth, still held sway and reigned as undoubted queen in all intellectual disputations. Even the works of art and poetry bore witness to her jealousy of power and authority. Nothing was suffered to escape, so ambitious was Theology to include in her theoretical classification every department of human activity—the law which she had codified and the learning which she had fashioned. Theology and Dialectics dominated the entire assemblage of teachers and students which about the year 1200 were incorporated as the University of Paris. This organisation served as a model for the other universities of Europe. Rhetoric had its laws and speeches, poetry its Latin hymns, epics, and wondrous tales. The latter also comprised the lyrical effusions of the "Trouvères" of Northern France and the "Troubadours" of the South, the "Minnesingers" of Germany and the romance-writers of Spain and Portugal. History was represented by Joinville. But the brilliance, in common with that of other classes of knowledge, was to pale before the rise of philosophy. Bibliography, geography, mathematics, and physical science were all to be merged in the magnificent comprehensiveness of Philosophy.

"Above the world, above the age" [1] dominated the name and teaching of Thomas Aquinas. His master mind influenced all who would discuss theology. In him breathed the spirit of the monasteries, and in him was personified the enthusiasm which induced men's minds, until now trammelled by mysticism, to seek first causes. With his attention habitually fixed on pure abstractions, the *Angel of the Schools*, a stranger to all that was passing in the world of action and change, was elaborating his system of philosophy. He believed that he had established upon permanent foundations the principle of human individuality. His pupil and inseparable friend followed closely in his steps, Bonaventurus, "The seraphic doctor," whose real name was Giovanni di Fidenza. Less didactic than Thomas Aquinas, he revealed in his

[1] So his compatriot and admirer Pico della Mirandola represents him.

allegories and dogmatic text-books a heart moved by Divine compassion With the one, mental brilliance was conspicuous, with the other a beautiful purity of life. The soul of Bonaventurus was steeped in a tender mysticism, and in attributing everything to God he strove to lose his personality in that of the Godhead by an act of supreme adoration.

For man had caught a momentary glimpse of the hope of attaining absolute knowledge by reasoning and of understanding it by faith.[1]

However, the great adversary of Thomas Aquinas, the Scotchman Duns Scotus, a man with an equally vigorous and unfettered mind, possessed of a marvellous dexterity and subtlety that nothing could baffle, touched the weak spot of this fine metaphysical scaffolding. His doctrine which advanced the theory of individual liberty, anticipated modern philosophy in its exaltation of the will.

§ 2.

In lower and surer circles, poetry maintained its predominance. It emerged from the soil in a thousand places as a modest spring, a limpid stream, or free-flowing and abundant torrent. Under this fertilising influence many forms of poetry, which had appeared to be confined to the ancients, revived, such as the ode, the epic, the satire, the elegy, and even the drama. God, the heavens, Nature, glory, patriotism, courage, and, above all, love—none of these subjects came amiss to this crowd of versifiers who had one and all hovered round the idea before they had as yet found the form in which to clothe it. They expressed their feelings with regard to joys, griefs, festivals, losses, affections, hatreds

[1] The chief work of Thomas Aquinas, the *Sum of Theology*, a sort of vast encyclopædia of knowledge and scholastic theology (developed on the principles and methods of peripateticism), is the greatest effort of the Middle Ages to reconcile two very different elements, viz., human and Divine philosophy.

with that frankness, that unsophisticated natural genius, that often draws its happiest charm from its failure as a work of art, seeming to partake of the character and privilege of the works of Nature.

In France the poetic culture of the North, having assimilated the now decadent remains of Southern culture, developed brilliantly.

In the form of trifling songs, the "Trouvères" vied with each other in spriteliness and eloquence. Thibaut, Count of Champagne and King of Navarre, was their model. If he was not the inventor of the harmonious rhythms [1] which he employed, he handled them with much skill and flexibility. Courtly disputes, tender aspirations, and songs of gallantry were their inexhaustible subjects.

Whilst the Carlovingian and Celtic poems of chivalry inundated Europe with their modifications and perpetual variations, songs contrived to exist everywhere, having acquired from a very early period, without much elaboration, a graceful refrain and easy rhythm. Songs travelled with the French "jongleurs," the Provençal "troubadours," the English minstrels and the numerous companies of German "Minnesingers," who often contested the prizes with the "trouvères," their masters and models.

At the end of the thirteenth century the poems of the minstrels appear in England.[2] The Norman barons having now become Englishmen, seek entertainment and tales of adventure in the retirement of the manors. They are well versed in chivalry, and demand the recital of deeds of valour. The minstrels readily satisfy their curiosity, marking their recital with chords on the harp. They have in their repertory translations or imitations of French tales, which reflect their chief qualities of grace, tenderness, and

[1] Thibaut of Champagne is credited with the invention of the alternation of feminine and masculine rhymes in French prosody.

[2] Walter Scott imitated this branch of literature in his first most celebrated poetical work, the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

gallantry. But the average social life is hardly equal, it would seem, to the beauty of these sentiments. Bands of brigands traverse the country and devastate it. Barons with large escorts of men-at-arms and archers swoop down, wounding, killing, and extorting blackmail. The peace-loving minstrels, however, inspired by the echoes of the "Courts of Love," sing in impassioned tones, with equal joy, in honour of the Madonna or their mistress, and for a brief space amuse the barons by telling of the joyous life led by the monks and nuns, safe from attack in their convents.[1] They also glorify Love and Woman.

The accounts of savage war in Germany are followed by the sweet songs of the "Minnesingers." Suabia was their poetic cradle. The songs are inspired by the shade of Gothic towers—"the dove sighing[2] in the eagle's nest." The rugged barons listen in astonishment, wishing to hear these songs again; they themselves even try to repeat such new sentiments. Woman is revealed almost suddenly to them as in the Arthurian cycle, with a charm and fascination hitherto unknown to them. They are touched and their imagination is purified; love becomes to these iron-hearted men a religious, heroic, and paramount sentiment. Already Wolfram of Eschenbach, Godfrey of Strasburg, and Hartmann of Aue, had revealed to their fellow-countrymen in works of considerable talent, the most beautiful legends of gallantry and virtue ever calculated to charm the imagination or encourage piety. Soon "Minne," or the love-idea, took possession of all hearts. Any knight who felt the inspiration considered himself bound in honour to offer his homage to beauty in some known rhythm, or if need be, and he were possessed of the faculty of invention, to enrich the language with new forms. How countless were the tender missives,

[1] Such was Michael of Kildare, the first Irishman who wrote English verse, and who is credited with the authorship of the *Land of Cockagne*—a burlesque on a too laxly governed Abbey of Cockagne.

[2] A. Bossert.

the charming dialogues, and the languishing regrets when the time of parting came, and how great were the sorrows of separation !

Happy Minnesinger ! The plaint of love was frequently on his lips ; he readily told his troubles and pains, yet in truth he was always light-hearted and happy ; sorrows touched without afflicting him too grievously, or rather they pricked him sufficiently, exciting him to further poetic efforts. He sang as the sun shines, or the stream flows ; his sole joy was poetry, and if he dearly loved to sing the praises of Woman, it was that she incessantly inspired him to that which lay nearest his heart—songs and verses.

This poetry of the Suabian troubadours was not distinguished by any great variety of colour ; the names of individual writers were lost in the uniformity of subjects. Moreover, the framework showed but slightly varying form. But their poetry had freshness and grace, which are still delightful. "For friends of the past, eager to pursue their researches beyond a too near perspective," says Bossert, "its flowers have preserved their perfume, its springs their limpidity and their music, its forests their mysteries, its feminine figures their delicate and ephemeral grace." In short, its gentle beauty has in nowise faded.

§ 3.

The love of pure literature was everywhere the mark of nobility. Nothing was more usual than to behold noble princes and sovereigns zealously striving for the laurels of poetry. In the Iberian peninsula it was the kings who first furnished the models. Peter of Aragon is the oldest troubadour of Spain. Alphonse the Scholar, historian, and philosopher, invented harmonious rhymes to sing the merits of the Virgin, or to relate in a touching manner, in Galician language, the miraculous healing of his father. Whilst the poets of the North in France and Germany were inspiring

the imaginations of the people with enthusiasm for epic poetry, this learned prince was composing his *cantigos* at Seville. In Portugal, Denis I. introduced to his people the tender beauties of the music of words. He personifies the dawn of literature in his country.[1]

Italy made noble preparation for the coming of Dante and Petrarch. Poetry then was only in its infancy, and was feebler than in Germany, France, or Spain ; when, however, the poetic stream began to flow it bubbled forth in marvellous abundance. Sicily was its cradle, and Francis of Assisi one of its earliest exponents. This sublime wanderer would pass along the road singing to the people ecstatic hymns, believing himself to be already partaking of supernatural life by virtue of mystical love. At Pisa and Siena artists produced living sculptures in stone, and Italian art blossomed true to nature—delicate, tender, and pious. Around the Emperor Frederick II., his sons, the kings Enzio and Manfred, and his chancellor, Pierre des Vignes, circled a veritable legion of poets. For some years Palermo was almost the capital of Europe and centre of trade, until Sicily was drawn by the House of Hohenstauffen into the war between the Empire and the Papacy. This had no national interest further, but it ultimately produced the liberation of the civil power in Europe.

In all states of Europe there was now a foretaste of the Renaissance, prognosticating the full brilliance of the sixteenth century. External affairs, the conditions of the time—in short, the environment—were favourable. It would seem that the Christian world, after so many difficulties, had at last realised the political form towards which, since the invasion of the barbarians, it had been tending. Wars themselves, by throwing together men of different nations, taught them much ; the peace that followed gave them the means of letting that which they had learnt in the hazards of war

[1] One might say that the literary history of Portugal in its early stages is comprised in the history of its princes.

and violence bear fruit in the time of calm. The lords led a happy life in their castles, enlivened by hunting and festivities—a life celebrated in joyous song by the trouvères and minstrels; this, however, only when the conflicts of rivalries or the calls to the Crusades did not draw to the battlefield a people constantly under arms. So every manor was capable of becoming, when occasion offered, a small or possibly a brilliant sphere of poetic activity.

§ 4.

We should, however, be wrong in supposing that the end of the thirteenth century was the golden age of former society. For on the one hand men had not abandoned by any means the habits of violence inherent in feudal institutions, and on the other hand these institutions themselves began to totter on their foundations.

But recently the European world had been divided between two powers—the Church and Feudalism—the one having as its corner-stone sacerdotalism and the Papacy, and the other chivalry for its main support. On one occasion they had joined forces, and from the union sprang that gigantic epic—the Crusades. Their first effort had been entirely the work of religious and feudal enthusiasm. For two centuries Roman pontiffs had striven to maintain this bold enterprise, and on eight occasions had precipitated Europe upon the East. However, their exactions and objurgations, their reiterated appeals and imperious anathemas against those who refused to listen, had at last wearied both rulers and peoples; Rome ceased to be irresistible. The attempts at popular revolution in Italy, soon followed by schismatic scandals, prove how far her power and influence had declined. Moreover, her quondam servants, barons, and lords had but poor reward on earth for their bravery and their sacrifices. To meet the expenses of distant wars they had disposed of their possessions, sold their privileges, and,

by the very fact of their absence, had lost a considerable part of their authority over their serfs and vassals.

Preachers and knights alike, on their return from the Holy Land, had not found matters as they had left them. During their foreign sojourn a new world, speaking a language hitherto unknown, talking of individual rights, and claiming that all men had a right to the sunshine, had arisen.

The secular and burgher idea had been implanted in the soil with the universities and townships ; henceforth it possessed its educators and poets, and began a war of opposition, at first covert and disguised, but becoming daily bolder and more conscious of its own resources. In things moral as well as political, the symptoms of transformation were manifest. Abelard in the preceding century, and after him, Guillaume de Saint Amour, had secularised learning. The liberal education of the universities had brought about memorable attacks on the teaching orders. In arts exactly the same state of things occurred as in letters. Up to the twelfth century the maintenance of buildings, roads, and fountains was in the hands of the clergy. The Masonic lodges had at length contested this privilege with them, and had in turn wrested it from them. Civil and ecclesiastical power had divided public office, and the general opinion became prevalent that a special function belonged to each—that the universities were to teach, the Freemasons to build, and the King and his ministers to govern. Faith had not entirely disappeared, but the bourgeois common-sense began to be somewhat distrustful and critical, finding the yoke of ecclesiasticism as hard to bear as was their subjection to feudal abuses. We are to see that in the common tone of satire.

Moreover, a scoffing or systematic incredulity possessed people's minds after the reaction from Manichean belief. The hostile elements between the castes and classes increased. On every hand sects flourished ; some springing up from the ashes of the stake, defying the thunderbolts of Catholicism

and forcing orthodoxy into discredit by its excessive measures of repression. Faith in general had cooled ; the great ecclesiastic foundations of the preceding centuries no longer sufficed to vivify the stream which the arid logic of the school had dried. They were exposed already to such biting satire as that of Jean of Meung and to the ill-disguised parodies of the malicious authors of the *Roman de Renart.*

In the fourteenth century the lowering of a moral standard, the habits of a narrow formalism without genuine warmth, succeeded the naïve spontaneity or the great enthusiasm of former times ; these, together with the violences of the Inquisition and the troubles of the Hundred Years' War, extinguished the fire of genius. For nearly a century Provençal literature had not recovered owing to the consequences of the disastrous crusade against the Albigenses. We cannot fail to recall the blossoming of this joyous literature, which experienced a brief span of splendour and beauty. It was at the time when *langue d'oc* (dialect of Southern France) was spoken from Venice to Foix, from Poitiers and the banks of the Loire to the far boundaries of Castile ; from Vaud to Marseilles and Aix. The harmonious idiom had penetrated by various channels to England, Germany, Bohemia, and Hungary. The "troubadours" boasted in having given birth, so to speak, to Italian and Spanish poetry, especially the former. All this success and glory had vanished. It was stifled in the bloodshed of the siege of Toulouse (1218), never to revive but in rare and feeble echoes until the fourteenth century.

CHAPTER XII

Birth-struggle of a new age—Grave aspects of the fourteenth century—Violent transformation of peoples and ideas—Forerunners of the Reformation—Wiclif—John Huss—Jerome of Prague—Predominance of political and social facts over the uncertain movement of letters—Fall of the Eastern Empire—This catastrophe brings Greek literature from Constantinople to Italy—Fall of Arab civilisation in Spain—Relative sterility of the French genius—The torch of civilisation passes into the hands of Italy—The dawn of the Renaissance.

§ 1.

The fourteenth century means a period of violent changes for the whole of Europe; so many evils seemed loosed at the same time to work their will upon mankind. The accumulation of disasters which the French monk Raoul Glaber chronicles as marking the early years of the eleventh century, the terrible events, the deadly pestilence, the infinite distress, which Oriental historians describe when Basil II. ("the slayer of the Bulgarians") ruled the terrified East, the indescribable sum total of wars, anarchy, disasters, and public misery, all these pale before the horrors of the fourteenth century.

The whole of Europe is aflame. The feudal empire of the Hohenstauffen dynasty and the Papacy exhaust themselves in endless contest. The spectacle of an extraordinary schism outrages the conscience and the credulity of mankind. Avignon and Rome struggle in a scandalous affray, their pontiffs are unholy, avaricious, and simoniacal. Elected and degraded, replaced by others even more shameless, these

popes and anti-popes wage war and thunder forth their mutual curses and interdicts. Every kingdom is shaken and the peoples groan in despair. Civil war is permanent in Italy ; fighting goes on in the streets of Rome ; Genoa and Venice rival each other in the ferocity of their reprisals. The factions in Naples and Milan are excessive in their violence ; in Spain the Christians have not yet shaken off the Moors whom they long to murder. A pitiless hatred destroys the provinces ; Castile and Aragon might well hesitate in deciding which had secured possession of the most brutal murderer, the one having Peter the Cruel and the other Peter the Ceremonious, whilst Charles the Bad, a veritable poisoner, reigns in Navarre. The Flemish and Dutch provinces stream with blood, and in Bohemia and Hungary fierce contests are waged between the Slavs and the Turcomans. In the north the Russians are fighting to the death with the Tartars and Swedes ; in the south the Greeks, Mongols, and Turks are in the toils of war ; whilst in Asia Minor the formidable invasion of Bajazet comes like a whirlwind. "With a cloud of janissaries he passes, sweeping away cities and devastating the country. He descends upon Nicopolis, where he annihilates the Catholic forces united to bar his route, and purposes destroying the chair of S. Peter. That would have meant the end of Christianity in the West. However, Tamburlaine, a Mongol conqueror (famous for the pyramid of ninety thousand skulls which he erected on the ruins of Baghdad), comes at full speed from the steppes of Asia, falls in turn upon Bajazet, and is victorious, crushing his hordes in terrible combat. Europe in alarm looks on at the encounter of these two raging combatants, who like waterspouts collide, merge and drench the continent in a rain of blood." [1]

[1] Huysmann's *Saint Lidwine of Schiedam*, p. 38 (1901)says : "'It rains blood,' cried a Byzantine poet, John Geometer, in 989, when the terrible battle between Basil Porphyrogenetus and Bardas Skleros was in progress."

Scaffolds, stakes, and other marks of the evil genius of mankind, or the effects of natural disasters are found everywhere.[1] What intellectual progress was possible for Europe in such a period?

It is true that French civilisation, if considered from the beginning of this terrible fourteenth century, was not devoid of some brilliance. Despite the degradation of society, despite the public misfortunes which crushed the stationary populations of town and country, it had maintained in higher circles some superficial culture. We have only to read the chronicles of John Froissart, the much-admired painter, historian, and eye-witness, to gain an impression of the feudal pomp, the fine passages of arms and great expeditions of the time. The Court of Valois remained the most distinguished centre, the favourite scene of festivities, tournaments and chivalrous exercises—in short, the chosen rendezvous of princes. But what sources could inspire the heart of a nation, its poets and artists, to those joyous undertakings in which kings took pleasurable interest, when that nation was in the throes of one of the darkest periods of its history?

Nor were the harshness of Philip le Bel, the frivolity of the Valois, the irresponsibility of the nobles, the poor spirit of the middle classes, and the general brutality, calculated to favour an artistic revival. The hour was at hand when the ascendancy which France had exercised during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the realm of arts and letters was to pass to another people. Strasburg and Cologne became the schools of that style which the Franks had founded—*opus francigenum*. Henceforth the leadership of the painters of Avignon, all of Italian origin, was recognised. In Florence and Rome the mendicant orders, having become rich, prided themselves on their bountiful patronage of art. Italy progressed rapidly, despite the disorders caused by factions and schisms, which kept her in a continual state of ebullition.

[1] The Black Death ravaged all the West.

§ 2.

The *Divine Comedy* may be regarded as a long awaited example of that romanticism which is to be found in Italy some years before she, as chosen heir of Greece and Rome, had manifested her love for classic art and taste. By a happy chance the Italian language was formed by three men of genius : Dante, whose work forms the gorgeous entrance to this literature ; Petrarch, last and most accomplished of Troubadours, who revived and re-inspired lyric poetry ; and Boccacio, the most classic of tale-writers, who was the father of elegant, effortless prose, the supple, clear, and malleable phrase which can adapt itself to all forms of style and thought. These authors abandon the use of Low Latin for their original works, and, resorting to the purity of classic models, were most zealous students in their study of the language of Virgil and Homer. After the success of Petrarch, Rienzi, and Boccacio, the Italians began to bring to light the manuscripts buried in the "dungeons" of France and Germany. The zeal of Petrarch was indefatigable in collecting these venerable pages, copying them in his own hand, addressing them to friends, and urging his pupils to circulate them in numerous transcriptions. He did this with that religious devotion which the ancients showed towards their gods. We should read what Petrarch relates of his heart-throbs when he approached a monastery, hoping to discover some precious manuscript, or of his deep emotion when he reflected : "Perhaps it may be that I shall find here what I have sought so long." The public mind was inspired by a romantic enthusiasm. Very opportune, moreover, was the immigration of the Greek scholars Pachymeres, Nicephorus, Planudes, Cantacuzenus, and Chrysoloras, who, fleeing the oppression of their country, brought to Italy the germs of studies the fruits of which were to honour the succeeding century—the age of erudition.

Other European nations, in their isolated progress, were left far behind Italy.

Chaucer, with his too brief career, brilliantly headed a series of national writers in England ; yet he stands out as an isolated landmark. His facile, easily moulded style was enriched by his veritable gifts of creative genius, and although of set purpose he gathered the fairest flowers of foreign literature, the results yielded were new and quite original works. The English imagination was ready to follow him,[1] prepared to scale the heights of invention. Suddenly, however, it was arrested in its development by the disasters of civil wars and the troubles which led to the Reformation. Torn by the Lollard movement, and furthermore by the somewhat premature attempts and socialism and communism of Wat Tyler and Jack Cade, and later by the internecine quarrels of the rival Houses of York and Lancaster, England had but little time to cull flowers of poetry. We must wait until nearly the second half of the sixteenth century before we can perceive a genuine intellectual revival worthy of the name.

Spain revealed mere glimpses of the magnificent promises of the approaching period, destined to be the most brilliant in the literary history of the peninsula. At least, she had but recently seen the striking figure of the Castilian Rabelais, Juan Ruiz, "high priest of Hita." The mass of his poems, beginning in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are written with correlation or continuity. They are interspersed with fables, quotations, songs, invocations to Venus, hymns to the Virgin, love passages, licentious pictures, trifles of all kinds, often finishing with a sermon. In the medley

[1] The influence of Chaucer is continued in the modernisation of some of his tales by Dryden, and subsequently by Leigh Hunt and others. It can be easily traced in the works of Sir Philip Sidney and the dramatists of the Elizabethan age. Already in the reign of Henry VIII. the interludes of John Heywood, marking the commencement of the English theatre, were derived directly from this copious source. Did not Chaucer himself possess the dramatic instinct? He was eminently capable of developing an intrigue, and his ability to portray his characters in dialogue was in no way inferior to his talent for narrative.

of his inventive burlesque was revealed the strangest and most fantastic genius that Spain has produced.[1]

Germany, like Bohemia and Hungary, was groaning under the scourge of civil war. She produced, however, quite a school of poets—the artisan corporation of the Meistersingers, whose satiric note was the fitting expression of all discontent, class-hatred, and the increasing attacks on all hands on the abuses and vices of feudal hierarchy. Artisans and poets composed their verses to the cadence of the hammer-strokes on the anvil.

Hans Sachs was the last of the Meistersingers ; this poor and joyous cobbler of Nuremberg, whom Goethe honoured as one of his poetic teachers,[2] has not ceased to live in the memory of the German people.

§ 4.

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries marked a certain moral and social progress in France notwithstanding the grievous crisis which occurred. In spite of the dogged determination of Rome to prevent intellectual emancipation, the belief in the supernatural declined by reason of the increased attention paid to the fine methods of demonstration. The two professions of medicine and constitutional law[3] became influential. Theologians, believing that all knowledge is inspired by God, treated both at first as enemies, the one because they wished to substitute scientific logic for metaphysics, the other because they were opposed to mystic explanation, hitherto unchallenged, of natural

[1] See A. de Puibusque : *Comparative History of French and Spanish Literature.*

[2] The author of *Faust* often imitated the style of this indefatigable rhymer (the sum of whose productions exceeded seven thousand), and paid him immortal homage in his work entitled *Hans Sachsens Poetische Sendung.*

[3] The lawyers, the leader of whom was the famous William of Nogaret (whose father had been burnt by the Inquisition), offered their services to Philip le Bel during his quarrel with Boniface VIII.

phenomena and relied on actual demonstration and empiricism. From the great sacerdotal synthesis which the Middle Ages had erected we pass now to philosophical analysis which marks their close.

These two centuries, moreover, saw the secularisation of the State under Philip le Bel; the revival of worldliness under the Valois; the rise of the intelligent and patriotic middle class under the leadership of Etienne Marcel; the birth of the patriotic ideal under Joan of Arc; the inauguration of an administrative and active government under Charles V.; and finally, most important of all, extraordinary discoveries destined to revolutionise the face of the world.

And now a new feature sprang from the theological disputes and religious agitations which were fermenting in Italy, England, and Germany, namely, the democratic idea. An aggressive spirit of Retribution evinces itself in all the writings of the fourteenth century, even in the lightest forms of literature. The same quality is more or less repeated everywhere; in France in the satirical parodies of the "trouvères"; in Germany in the facetious and jesting legend of *Tyll Eulenspiegel;* in England in the *Visions of Piers Ploughman*, otherwise Peter the Labourer, who from his Worcestershire hills viewed the world of prelates and nobles without illusion and judged them without pity; in Italy in the bold imitations of French writings. Nor did it cease there, but with louder voice and graver tone it did not hesitate to challenge at once the highest spiritual power—the papacy itself.

The Englishman Wiclif appeared towards 1367, in the reign of Edward III. That was a period of violent discontent towards Rome and the clergy; the Lollards had arisen; the House of Commons had proposed the confiscation of all Church property. Protestantism all but burst forth a hundred and fifty years before its appointed time. The revolt of Wiclif had, it must be admitted, been provoked by ecclesiastical corruption, but protested also against the doctrines of

the Church. The forerunner of the Reformation fearlessly taught that the bread of the Eucharist was not the material Body of Christ, but only a symbol ; that the Roman Church had no right to the supremacy over other Churches, nor her bishops over other bishops ; that it was lawful to deprive a guilty Church of her temporal possessions ; that the Bible was alone sufficient guide for every Christian. The tendencies of the time and the translation of the Bible into the vulgar tongue had favoured, in a remarkable manner, the diffusion of Wiclif's doctrines, which were for the most part drawn from theses of Berenger of Tours against the dogma of transubstantiation and against the supremacy of the pope. In a short time a large number of Englishmen had assumed the name of Lollards, under the leadership of Lord Cobham, who became the victim of his ideas ; others declared themselves the followers of Wiclif. Then under the power of the Church, of royalty, and the coalitions of the lords, the budding reform was all but destroyed, only to reappear at intervals in the blood of its martyrs. But long before the accession of Henry VIII. England had shown herself ripe for the suppression of the monasteries, and long before receiving democratic institutions she had known through the audacious preaching of John Ball that all men are equal.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, and almost simultaneously, two other attempts at reform are noticeable—the first directed by the ecclesiastical aristocracy itself, and arising among councils; the second of a violent and passionate character, springing from the people under John Huss and the Hussites. He produced a strange tumult when, in the name of the Gospel and early Christianity, he entered into open rebellion against the princes of the modern Church. Summoned to the Council of Constance, he attended fearlessly on the faith of a safe conduct granted by the Emperor Sigismund ; only, however, to be arrested on his arrival and thrown into prison.

On June 5, 1415, he was brought before his judges loaded

with chains. The Council began by declaring that a promise or word of honour pledged to a heretic could be broken with impunity. Thirty articles of accusation were exhibited against the brave apostle. He was compelled to kneel and listen to the iniquitous sentence, by which his body and his writings were condemned to be burned. He died at the stake, as also did the eloquent Jerome of Prague, and passed away singing hymns. All Bohemia, burning with anger and fury, took a grim revenge for their death which lasted a quarter of a century.

§ 5.

It is clear that great political and social events exercised very considerable influence upon literary progress in the unsettled realm of letters.

In 1453 one of those remarkable events took place the prolonged event of which define the end of one epoch and the commencement of another. We have lately described the fall of the Eastern Empire under the assault of Mahomet II. This successor of Bajazet and Amurath II. had from his accession onwards directed his plans and efforts to the capture of Constantinople. He was neither the barbaric conqueror nor the fanatical votary of the Koran which he appeared to Latin imagination. He was a learned and enlightened man, capable of speaking five languages, versed in both mathematics and military science, interested in arts and generous to artists. A sceptic at heart as regards religion, he was disposed to regard both the Mussulman and Christian faiths as equally frank impostures. He carried out his political aims with resolute, inflexible determination, and desired nothing more than to enthrone himself at Byzantium.

Historical events had recently brought East and West together. Byzantine sovereigns had often sought the support of Rome against the threatening advance of the Turks. Attempts at an agreement and an effective alliance tended to

remove, at any rate for a time, the obstacle, which the separation of the Churches had raised, when suddenly came the news of the Mahometan invasion beneath the very walls of Constantinople. The voice of Nicholas V. exhorting the princes and peoples of the West to go to the defence of the Greeks resounded in vain. Enemies among themselves, and thereby weakened; anxious only to promote their own social advancement, these peoples were deaf to the cry of distress which came from Byzantium.

On May 29, 1453, the city was taken by assault. One of the first to fall, dying within the breach, was Constantine Palæologus, the last Roman Emperor.

A vast crowd of people took refuge in the great nave of San Sofia. Monks and friars, women, children, and priests expected to see an angel descend from heaven and, with his invincible sword, stay the invasion of the barbarians. The Turks, fierce and full of violence, penetrated even the basilica as they had flooded the city. The angel the people awaited did not appear, and both men and women were seized and carried off into slavery. The same day the muezzin ascended the highest tower of San Sofia and proclaimed the triumph of Islam. Constantinople had met the fate of Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Carthage, uniting in her fall that of Oriental Hellenism.

The Byzantine Empire had preserved Roman law, the works of antiquity, and the masterpieces of Greek and Latin authors.[1]

Just before its fall it had given to the Greek tongue offshoots unworthy of the ancient stock, but nevertheless nourished with its immortal sap. The Empire was overwhelmed by this violent return to barbarism. The scholars it had protected (Michael Doucas, John Lascaris, Andronicus,

[1] In a striking example of statistics drawn up by Mr. Wolf we are shown that Greece can claim possession of three-quarters of the sixteen hundred works, intact or mutilated, which heathen antiquity has bequeathed to the world.

Mousuros, &c.) sought refuge in Italy, whither they transferred at the same time their erudition and precious manuscripts. There they became the teachers of Europe, and initiated a new era in the history of their language. Once more Greek civilisation spread from Italy to the rest of the world.

§ 6.

In her novels and tales of adventure Spain maintained the political and religious ideal to which these proud descendants of the Pelasgians obstinately clung, whilst the fires of the Inquisition blazed unceasingly. Nevertheless she remained far below the general level of civilisation that her Latin sister had attained. If the fall of Granada, the last bulwark of the Moors, were a happy event for Spanish patriotism, the immediate effects were only disastrous for arts and literature.

When in 1492 the Catholic kings took Granda, they burned in a single day one million five hundred thousand volumes of Arabic literature—a gigantic *auto-da-fé*. It was no mean counterpart of that conflagration which, according to report, the sacrilegious hand of Omar, or rather of his lieutenant, Amru, had kindled with a view to destroying all the treasures of the library of Alexandria. No less barbaric was the action of the first Archbishop of Mexico, who in the sixteenth century burnt in the market-place of that town a vast collection of Aztec manuscripts, priceless documents of ancient American civilisations.

Arab genius was completely eclipsed in this, its country of adoption, which it had enriched with its ancient wisdom and influenced by its poetry, architecture, and learning. The spirit of intolerance and fanaticism which led the Spaniards to regard the Moors only as enemies to be exterminated induced them also to undervalue the benefits they had derived from them. On all hands Arab manuscripts were mutilated or destroyed and replaced by the dry chronicles of the monasteries, Catholic Spain thinking to gain much by

the exchange. Thus the heirs of Charles V., in driving out peaceful agriculturists, calculated they were purifying their native soil; they only succeeded, however, in effecting its ruin.

In France existed a relative sterility. In a few names alone we see a survival from the shipwreck of the ideas and achievements of former times. The poetry of the feudal age would seem to be quite dead if we did not see, surviving by some happy chance among the dreary masters of cold rhetoric, Prince Charles of Orleans, son of Valentine of Milan. He, half Italian by birth and more than French by sentiment, recalls in his methods of rhyming the poetical style and gifts of Thibaut of Champagne. He neither loaded his verses with deep sentiments nor great thoughts, but delighted in ingenious surprises in roundel and ballad, and showed that he had discovered the secret of immortalising in such concise form the fragile and fleeting beauty of his gifts.

Quite at the beginning of the century Alain Chartier, inspired by the misfortunes of his day, gave utterance to the strains which move us still. We should hear no more of this poet, the beloved of queens, if in the days of national sorrow the nobly patriotic appeals of his *Quadrilogium* to the conscience of his country had not saved the memory of the prose-writer from oblivion.

Villon, however, appeared to close the list of authors of the Middle Ages. He belongs already to modern times by his firmness of language, originality of thought, and boldness of construction. Similarly on a higher plane, the philosophic historian Philip of Commines bears witness to the appreciable evolution which was present in ideas and sentiments. Commines was the first to write critical history, to treat political questions as a statesman and to discuss them as a philosopher. A sceptic in morals, and obstinately valuing personal interest and honour with reference only to their results, he foreshadowed Machiavelli. He unites the cruel

reasoning of the Florentine with the remnant of religious ingenuity of former chroniclers. Every feature in the prose of Commines points to the end of the Middle Ages: the events he relates, the reflections he makes upon them, the style he employs, and even the words he uses.

These few men, to whom we must in justice add that anonymous precursor of Molière, the author of the farce *Maître Pathelin*, are isolated examples, who scarcely relieve the general feebleness of literary effort. Apart from them art becomes more and more undecided, the derision of ancient beliefs more cynical in expression, and immorality more prevalent.

The Roman period was certainly ended; another, more gloomy and dull, succeeded. The imagination failed owing to the excess of public woes. France had lost the intellectual hegemony which had but recently been one of her most incontestable privileges. Italy, almost single-handed, set forth with unparalleled brilliance upon the path of literary glory, upon which path it was destined that all Europe should shortly strive to follow.

CHAPTER XIII

Social troubles abroad—Wonderful expansion of arts and literature in Italy—The revival of ancient learning—Two great historical facts: the renaissance of letters and the reformation of religion—The link uniting them—Their parallel advance—Luther, Erasmus, and Melancthon—Distant re-echo of the reformation in literature.

§ 1.

The fifteenth century in general is far from appearing a favoured era or one worthy of being regarded as an historic example. Without actually hindering social progress, the general standard of conduct was scarcely such as to quicken the public conscience. Deceit and treachery were openly applauded. "Perfidy is the statesman's strength" was the aphorism of both Louis XI. of France and Richard III. of England. In Italy the Borgias flaunted their disgraceful life before the eyes of Jerome Savonarola. Never were seen before such remarkable differences nor such marked contrasts; nor was there ever a more striking proof of the power of arts to flourish surrounded by and in spite of terrible social troubles. Italy was abandoned to anarchy. The rivalries among her princes and cities, the continual invasion of her territory by foreign armies, had reduced her to abject weakness. Political storms imperilled her existence as a nation. Nevertheless the most perfect works were still produced, the creative gift was not diminished in force or freedom. Italy attracted general attention, becoming the study or arousing the ambitions of all other countries. She

satisfied the manifold needs of the civilised world in supplying in turn engineers, captains, statesmen, bankers, professors of elocution, painters, architects, and sculptors. Gothic art had never been thoroughly adopted in Italy, where certain traditions of Roman art had always been preserved. The Renaissance style was transplanted from Italy into France ; there it took root, subsequently spreading to England and Germany.

One other country beyond the mountains showed signs of a similar art movement, namely, Flanders. Here small republics flourished, practically independent of each other, constituting as many favourable centres for the development of local schools, the cultivation of individual effort, and the fostering of originality.

Genuine inspiration followed this revival of ancient learning. It happened on Italian soil that men recovered the spirit of Beauty which they lost. People had believed her to be quite dead, while she had but slept. It was on April 18, 1485, a spring day of blossom and promise, that some Lombard workmen, while excavating the Appian Way at Rome, discovered an old white marble tomb. The cover having been raised, it seemed a spirit slept there ; for they saw a maiden with all the colours of life. They tried the efficacy of aromatic herbs and the rites of ancient magic until she seemed about to awaken and to re-open her long-closed eyes. Her cheeks were red as roses and her lips were smiling. The sweet miracle touched men's hearts. Crowds assembled, almost transported with love and enthusiasm. The maiden was reverently carried on her marble bed to the Capitol, where the whole city gathered and gazed so long upon her silent and almost heavenly charm that the Church became uneasy. Was a new and impious worship about to arise at the shrine of this sleeping idol ? The Pope ordered her to be moved by stealth during the night-time and buried in secret. But it was not in vain that men had looked upon her face, for, as the poet has said,

"She had the beauty of ancient times; through having simply gazed upon her the world began to blossom once more." Scarcely had this resuscitated beauty revealed her restrained elegance than all men were fascinated.

Nature had again been found behind the thick veils of scholasticism and monastic asceticism, which had hidden her from the eyes of men for so many ages. She reappeared, bringing with her in the first place the love of discovery, and in the next artistic and poetic enthusiasm, reuniting the worship of beauty and strength. Finally, she was instrumental in the perfection of an ideal style, which, beginning in that country nearest allied to the ancient civilisation of pagan Italy, was destined to conquer successively France, England, and even Germany, becoming modified in its course and adapted to the different characteristics of the races. For a considerable period Italy retained in a measure the monopoly of classical studies.

She became saturated with the classical spirit, as shown in her customs, poetry, and transactions. She imbued other nations with it, and revealed to the world the extraordinary multitude of ideas and happy imitations which might emanate therefrom to the profit of modern times. Savants such as Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Leonardo Bruno d'Arezzo, Pomponius Leto, and Cardinal Bembo exerted themselves to restore the learning of Greece and Rome. Scholars like Valla, Pogge, and Philelphus rendered the cause of the humanities the greatest service, though they dishonoured their reputation by the acrimony of their disputes. Both classes were wonderfully seconded by the legion of Greek literary men, George of Trebizond, Gaza, Argyropoulo, &c., who had escaped from the fall of Constantinople. Venice and Florence became, in the course of a few years, the centres of culture for the poets and grammarians who were natives of the isles of the Ægean Sea and the Archipelago. The princes vied with each other in encouraging these efforts, the most notable and

zealous among whom was Lorenzo de Medici. Whatever time he could spare from the stress of affairs and his duties as prince and magistrate, he devoted to study and to improvisations in Latin and Italian, to poetry and philosophical discourses with illustrious humanists, for whose company he had a great predilection. Others, again, who played the *rôle* of an enlightened Mæcenas were the Visconti, Sforzas, and Gonzagas, not omitting Hercules d'Este, who was to Ferrara what Lorenzo de Medici was to Florence, Ludovico, the Moor, to Milan, and subsequently Julius II. to Rome. The brilliant and debauched court of the House of Este, steeped in wild romanticism, which still retained the manners of the Middle Ages, was especially inclined to favour the culture of epic poetry. Boiardo was the precursor of Ariosto in this.

§ 2.

The invention of printing about 1436 had supplied unhoped-for resources for all. We find at the end of the fifteenth century a praiseworthy ambition for research and study. The sixteenth century, with such names as Leo X., Ariosto, Machiavelli, and so many others, was to find the way prepared on which it could display its brilliance. From every point of view the Italian spirit appears equally productive and distinguished. Such a nation and such an epoch would have been crowned with an incomparable glory had not dark clouds veiled so much brilliance and beauty from the eyes of posterity, and were it not also for the moral degradation of the great nobles and the extraordinary political duplicity which they reduced to a system. This system, known as Machiavellianism, with which Italy corrupted the conscience of the rest of Europe, was a grievous blot on her otherwise laudable contribution to civilisation.

Two great historical events lie at the heart of the epoch—the Renaissance and the Reformation. In them we see the

motive power and its manifestation. Nothing was accomplished apart from them ; all effort was directed towards them. They were not the results of the same cause, nor one of the other ; yet the link which unites them is easily recognisable. They have many points of contact, but, whether working hand in hand or independently, they often co-operate to bring about similar results. The invasion of ancient literatures introducing the languages, politics, philosophy, and worships of Rome and Athens into a society founded on catholicism and feudality, brought forward at the same time ideas in favour of discussion and free inquiry. Undoubtedly the Reformation was not created entirely by this ; it was much older, it was of long standing. Similarly, the brilliance of the Renaissance was already foreshadowed in the *Eternal Gospel* of Joachim of Fiore in the thirteenth century, and the *Divine Comedy* of Dante in the fourteenth. As we have already seen, the spirit of the Reformation had not awaited Luther's preaching to inflame the minds of men. The idea of reform had been proclaimed on various earlier occasions. The twelfth century had its reformers—men who fought vigorously before they were restrained by the authority of the councils and then crushed by the civil power. The mysticism of Arnaud de Brescia contained the germs of the sentiments to which Luther gave glowing and impassioned expression. In the fourteenth century the spirit of rebellion kindled the zeal of Wiclif in England and of John Huss and Jerome of Prague in Bohemia. The Reformation was almost made victorious by force of arms in the early years of the fifteenth century, when that incomparable leader, John Ziska, overcame the troops of the Empire in eight pitched battles. The promoters of heresy in the Middle Ages, superior to the flames of the stake and the agony of tortures, penetrated to the heart of catholicism. The sixteenth century was to witness the end of religious unity.

§ 3.

The Reformation was, therefore, inevitable quite apart from and independent of the advent of the Renaissance, from which it received considerable indirect but vigorous assistance, and by which it furthered its objects and facilitated and accelerated its progress, endowing it, moreover, with a new force whilst making with it a common advancement. The human mind was entering upon new conditions of existence. We see the Græco-Roman spirit invading the domain of scientific conceptions and the clash of the old pagan ideas mingling with the faiths which they were subsequently to undermine.

At the time of the Renaissance Europe was just recovering from the great schism of the West. The threats against the authority of the Church, already so fiercely attacked from without and enfeebled by inward dissension, became more menacing. The Papacy, being only human after all, could no longer stupefy the conscience of ordinary men ; the universities and academies criticised it freely. For a long time the University of Padua had been regarded as a hotbed of atheism, and it hardly surprised contemporaries to see the academies of Modena and Venice suppressed for heresy ; in fact, all Italy was irreligious.

In the writings of the irreverent author Pulci we find mocking incredulity and bold, sensual gaiety ; he heads each canto of a comic poem with a text from the Mass !

Minds impatient of constraint were only awaiting the opening of the flood-gates to the new current which was to sweep away the teaching and the enfeebled regulations of scholasticism. Christianity had transported man beyond and contrary to Nature ; classical studies persuaded him to an impassioned appreciation of Nature, for they revived his love of life,[1] which had theoretically been stifled by the

[1] The two most widely opposite notions clashed. "The God-man was brought into opposition with the Man-god—that is to say, Apollo Belvedere and Christ." (Dostoievski.)

harshness of dogma ; they introduced individualism, that paramount emulating principle, in place of the stereotyped uniformity of the Middle Ages, when one man greatly feared to differ from another. By virtue of this individualism every one assumed responsibility for his opinions, acts, and convictions, and for revealing his temperament in his works. Hence mankind hailed classicism as a long-awaited deliverer.

They who took the first steps in the road of revolt were attracted by the delights of intellectual inquiry. The world followed, eager to assume the same attitude towards free thought and doubt as it had formerly taken in respect of obedience and faith. No single idea, however deeply it might appear to be rooted by custom and tradition in the human mind, could escape the need for revision which tormented the conscience.

§ 4.

The two great names of Erasmus and Luther dominate and fill the first period of the century, the former the precursor, the latter the prophet of the Reformation. Between these two there stands Melancthon, the leader of Protestantism in Bohemia. Erasmus influenced the whole world by his energy and writings.

"There was a man in the sixteenth century," says Audin, "who counted popes and emperors among his courtiers, and who corresponded with Henry VIII., Francis I., Charles V., and Maximilian of Saxony. The cities of Germany welcomed him with triumphal arches, and among his admirers might be counted Thomas More, Bembo, Sadolet, Melancthon, Ulrich von Hutten, and Julius II. Communications to him were addressed : 'To the Prince of Letters,' 'To the Star of Germany,' 'To the Sun of Learning,' without any fear that the letters would go astray, for Erasmus alone deserved these titles." Even though the greater part of his literary work exists only on hearsay, the story of his European

influence, his controversies and discussions with Luther, and the stimulating initiative he brought to bear on the various departments of letters, philosophy, ethics, and education have become incorporated with the general history of the age.

He was persecuted by the Protestants, although he had often made common cause with them, and was looked on with suspicion by both parties because of his philosophic tolerance and an eclecticism of doctrine too advanced for the age. Erasmus ended his life at Bâle, at the house of his friend Froben, the printer—a life so full of turmoil which he had so ardently desired should be calm. Indeed, he had gone so far as to write the praise of liberty, rest, and folly in his *Enconium Moriæ*.

Only one man can be considered a worthy literary follower of Erasmus—Philip Melancthon, who was animated by a similar spirit of moderation and of compromise and an equal fervour for classical studies ; moreover, he well knew how to point erudition with elegance and polish of style.

Melancthon had the honour of re-establishing the value of true dialectic in all branches of human knowledge. It was further his especial glory that among those who recovered the works of antiquity, and who, according to Nisard, were themselves often dazzled by the brightness of the torch which they lit, he also succeeded in adapting parts of the ancient learning to the minds of little children. His influence as teacher was very great.

At first, in alliance with Luther, for whom he drew up the Act of the Confession of Augsburg in 1530, Melancthon endeavoured to exert a pacifying influence amidst the internal disputes of the new Church. By his virtue, moderation, and his many good offices he tried to maintain a certain amount of agreement among all, and to reduce to unity the confusion of the Lutheran sects. The German cities swarmed with Zwinglian preachers, Anabaptists, Carlstadians, Illyrians, and strict Lutherans, all of whom proclaimed they were sent

by God to preach His Word, and yet but ill concealed in their passionate sermons their lust for exclusive domination and sole authority. Melancthon, wearied of the constant strife, desired to bring peace to these newly liberated consciences, but he died without having succeeded in reconciling the Lutherans and Calvinists.

Luther was one of the most remarkable incarnations of German genius. When he appeared intellectuality in Germany was destitute of force and independence, except, perhaps, for a few dying echoes of the popular poetry of the Meistersinger Schools of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. A recrudescence of feudal tyranny had assisted in bringing about the material and moral enslavement of the people. The absence of individuality and the lack of independent conviction, the vague, undisciplined thought, the repressing influence exercised by the scholastic style in order to reduce the language, without distinction of subject, to one and the same wearisome, heavy mode of expression ; these characteristics are all evident in the medley of writings, in execrable Latin, intended as mental food. A few isolated authors laboriously employed the mother-tongue for the instruction and use of the people. They could put it to no better purpose than to amplify and complicate dry and barren moral themes, more or less modelled on theological treatises. These works seldom reveal even a germ of genuine philosophy, and only on rarest occasions any indications of higher inspiration, so encumbered are they by their didactic spirit.

Man had never been less free, never more restricted in the expression of his thoughts. This was the case whether he were personally subject to the privileged classes or to the governance of the guilds, whose rules tended to suppress almost absolutely any individual effort, and restricted the ideas, will, and action of all. In addition to feudal servitude and the absolutism of dogma, there was, as Freytag, the author of *German Pictures*, tells us, another form of vassalage,

whose effect, of an intellectual and religious character, was felt in private life, of a social and political nature in public life. It seemed too perilous to oppose established opinion, and to express dissatisfaction with theories was to risk an accusation of heresy. The brain and the heart were alike chilled to inaction, unconscious even of intellectual needs.

In suddenly proclaiming in this oppressive silence man's most noble prerogative, the independence of the individual, Luther, while only claiming it as the spring of personal action to secure the success of his religious ideas, gave an undesigned impetus to all forms of thought throughout Europe.

Need we recall his terrible struggle with Rome when opposition to Rome meant defying the whole world? The Papacy, skilful as it was in profiting by the incredulity of the people, had declared that the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, combined with the good works of supererogation on the part of the saints, provided means for the redemption from sin of all kinds for the souls of the dead in purgatory and for the souls of the living likewise. Further, that this means of grace, entrusted to St. Peter and his successors, could be transferred—that is to say, sold for money in the form of indulgences. Martin Luther, a monk of the Augustine Order, agitated against this traffic in indulgences, and exposed the Dominican, Tetzel, an inquisitor, papal legate, and delegate of Albert, Bishop of Mayence. Tetzel had been specially appointed to supervise this traffic and pious fraud in Germany. Luther next rejected the principle and denied the power of granting indulgences, and even the existence of purgatory, for the release from which these indulgences had been devised. Furthermore, he questioned the efficacy of good works, auricular confession, and absolution. Finally, he publicly protested the rights of individual judgment, though he subsequently did not respect those of his opponents. These were the fundamental principles of the Reformation, and gave great impetus to liberty of thought.

Eisleben, Eisenach, Erfurt, and Worms are the chief towns associated with Luther's tumultuous life and his militant pilgrimage across Germany. He struggled fiercely against the defenders of ecclesiastical immutability, Scultet, Cajetan, Staupitz, Wenceslas, Linck, and Miltitz, and also fought many contests with a throng of adversaries—renegades from his own camp—Mark Stubner, Storck, Munzer, Carlstadt, and Zwingli. He even suffered from struggles within—the revolts of an unstable conscience and perplexities of doubt, his Satanic obsessions and superstitious fears ; but in the face of all these difficulties he finally completed his work. He was destined to see the rending of Christian society, which was to have such lasting political and religious consequences. All Europe was divided between the opposing camps of Catholicism and Protestantism subsequent to the day this Augustine monk burned the bulls of Leo X. in the market-place of Wittenberg, and so separated himself publicly from Rome.

Many historians have represented in bold colours the accomplishment of the Reformation and its far-reaching effects on succeeding events as well as on the general trend of thought. For the leaven of Protestantism not only provoked an extraordinary ferment of ideas, but started the seething of social claims in the most distant part of Germany, hitherto crushed by the harshness of its laws. Literature, art, and science all bore the mark of a rational spirit, called into being by the action of the reformers, while in those countries which successfully resisted the Reformation the Renaissance triumphed, and here there was a consequent reversion to paganism.

CHAPTER XIV

Violent party and doctrinal conflicts—Calvin at Geneva—John Knox and Presbyterianism in Scotland—The social and religious counter-revolution—Ignatius Loyola—The Council of Trent—Prodigious mental activity despite the numberless evils which crushed the nations of Europe and elsewhere—A moment's consideration of the ruin of two exotic civilisations: Peru and Mexico—Public calamities do not check the progress of letters in the Italy of Tasso and Ariosto; nor in the England of Shakespeare; nor in the Spain of Cervantes; nor in Portugal, the birthplace of Camoens; nor even in Turkey, whose "golden age" it is—Return to the development of French literature.

§ 1.

In the last chapter we considered those two irresistible attractions, the Reformation and the Renaissance, which drew all eyes simultaneously to Germany and Italy. All those whose enterprising spirit had been captured by the search for the unknown, or by that eagerness for discovery which stimulated the courage of Columbus, Pizarro, Vasco da Gama, and so many bold adventurers of Spain and Portugal,[1] set out in their consecrated caravels for the conquest of the new world. They who were attracted by the vastness of the realm of liberated thought followed in the train of the reformers in an aggressive, cavilling, and ruthless activity.

There had been an open break between the present and the past in the literary and religious teaching of the whole of Europe. Moreover, the Reformation, in giving free rein to

[1] The age of reason is at its height. Columbus discovers, or rediscovers, America; Vasco da Gama doubles the Cape of Good Hope, and reaches India; Magellan sails round the world.

thought and speech, had also led to the discussion of material interests not less than of intellectual ideas. A spirit of universal enquiry entered into every province of human activity, and democratic theories permeated the popular mind.

Nevertheless every step in the march toward freedom is beset with difficulties. The sixteenth century, by one of those contrasts that not infrequently occur in history, represents both dawn of the aspirations and conquests of the modern world, and the period from which its most autocratic and centralising institutions are derived.

We have recently noted the violent and oppressive reinstatement of German feudalism, which followed the *Peasants' War*. It materially increased its power after the repression of the Anabaptist movement, and brought the serf and the villein additional burdens and misery.

Strong resistance was, however, offered to the Reformation movement, which, by the adherence of noble minds, the undisguised sympathy of high dignitaries, and the openly-declared support of several governments, would seem to have been rendered practically irresistible. Threatened interests fly to arms. Dogma has no dearer object than repairing the imprudence previously committed in aiding the great enquiry, the starting-point of which had been classical learning, but which had so quickly become burning questions of the present and the future. The religious and social counter-revolution was no less eager in defence than its adversaries were in attack. In Catholic minds there sprang up a fear of the changes about to occur. Christianity seemed likely to fall to pieces with amazing rapidity. Each in turn, from greed, conviction, or by bribes, a great part of Germany, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, and England broke away from Rome.

Geneva became the theological realm of Calvin, and he ruled with implacable severity.[1] In Scotland, the chosen

[1] The extreme austerity of his character is startling even in his conception and interpretation of the Deity. He does always preserve in writing

land of the Reformation by reason of its rigid and dogmatic traits, John Knox set upon the ruins of Catholicism the Presbyterian system, the same democratic and representative form of church government which the genius of Calvin had instituted at Geneva. Knox was the most passionate and logical of the disciples of the Genevan reformer, and he organised the famous Church of Scotland—the Kirk—as a free Church in a free State.

The papacy, noting the deflection of its adherents, is thrown back on itself, and musters all its forces. New sources of strength are created, and to lead these into action appeal is made to those defenders known to be animated by the blindest zeal.

Spain, "the priestly kingdom and holy nation," was best calculated to lend aid and to recruit special forces for the papal service, having at the very outset, in view of the spreading Reformation, posed as a champion of orthodoxy.

For many centuries Spain had completely subordinated independence of thought to the authority of the priests. The monks, who satisfied their material needs by means of the Church, had in return for that bounty the sole duty of insisting upon the maintenance of religion. The national writers, poets, and dramatic authors, for the most part ecclesiastics,[1] employed their talents to exalt in their *autos*, or religious dramas, the dogmatic teaching, and the saints and martyrs of the Church. Finally, the princes by their

or speaking the calm and powerful tone which befits the demonstration of a philosophical truth ; zeal often carries him away ; his language then becomes sinister, and his whole style expresses dread and horror. (Cf. Gidel & Loliée : *Ecrivains et Littératures.*)

[1] The most celebrated Spanish dramatic authors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were priests, notably Alarcon, Rojas, Solis, Calderon, Espinel, and Moreto. Lope de Vega was chief of a congregation of ecclesiastics at Madrid, and fiscal attorney of the apostolic chamber of the Archbishop of Toledo. Mira de Mescua was chaplain to Philip III. and IV. ; Tirso de Molina (Brother Gabriel Tellez was his religious name), so ironical towards monks and courtiers, was reader, teacher of theology, brother of the Order of Mercy, and prior of a convent of barefoot Carmelites.

personal devotion stimulate that of their subjects. Thus the Church, the aristocracy, and the authors all shared in riveting the chains of a voluntary bondage. Spain had seen the greatest of her monarchs, Charles V., when weary of his worldly glory, retire to a cell in the monastery of S. Just. Here he submitted to the strictest discipline, accepting with deepest humility the reproofs of the prior, appearing thereby to have attained a nobler glory. She also saw Philip II. leading a life even more narrow than that of a monk, obliging the Court to take part in his penances. He would tell his beads whilst giving order to his executioners, and finally buried himself alive in the crypt of the Escurial—itself more of a sepulchre than a palace.

Spain was thus admirably fitted to be the sword-arm of the Roman and Apostolic Church. She devoted herself to this, her pitiless religion, with the pride of performing some patriotic duty. The powerful religious order of the Jesuits was shortly to be initiated in Spain by that subtle controversialist and lofty visionary Inigo de Loyola y Onez, the mystic knight of the Virgin, whose one watchword was "War to the death" to maintain the absolute authority of the Church.

Few men in history have inspired so many ardent panegyrics and violent pamphlets as this soldier of the Papacy. He combined a high enthusiasm, an obstinate but methodical mind, an imperturbable perseverance, a vivid imagination inclined towards the supernatural, with a genuine humility which enabled him to exercise an astonishing influence over his fellows. He first planned the wonderful organisation which enabled a single society, having branches everywhere, yet obeying one sole head, to aspire to the universal direction of men's minds, and to rule simultaneously over the spiritual and material interests of the world, diffusing or withholding light at will. This society[1] was to wield a great educational

[1] Very much has been said, written, and imagined for and against the Society by Garasse, Guignard, Garnet, Busenbaum, Malagrida, Paulian,

and civilising influence, or to afford dangerous encouragement for political troubles by means of secret and incessant agitation in the centre of public institutions against recognised moral and secular ideas. Loyola gave the society the famous constitutions which Generals Lainez and Acquaviva, following his design, subsequently elaborated. He left a name detested by some, venerated by others, but before he died he caught a glimpse of the future greatness of the order, destined to suffer many attacks, conflicts, and sometimes persecutions, but which, like Antæus in the fable, was to emerge the stronger on every such occasion. At his death he left a hundred well-founded and flourishing colleges, whose influence was to spread from the forests of Brazil to the borders of Poland.

§ 2.

Three important events mark this great crisis in the history of the Church and the Papacy—an epoch as terrible as that of Arianism in the fourth century, and not less noteworthy in view of the interests involved. These are the founding of the Jesuit Order, the re-establishment of the Roman Inquisition, by which Protestantism was completely extirpated from Spain and Italy; and lastly, the Convocation of the Council of Trent.

This famous Council, several times summoned and adjourned, saw the clashing of the greatest names and most influential figures of the century, Charles V., Paul III., Catherine de Medici, and Philip II., Protestantism confronting the Vatican amidst the most unexpected vicissitudes of war and politics. Alas! far from bringing about the reconciliation and peace which both sovereigns and people desired, this assembly made even more severe the bonds of

Patouillet, Nonotte, and Ravignan. But to ascertain the truth concerning the Jesuits—the truth gathered from the most trustworthy sources—few would have the courage to disturb the dust which covers the treatises of Sanchez, Escobar, Diana, or Fillucius.

ecclesiastical discipline, and multiplied obligatory servitude, seeking to strengthen the absolute power of the Papacy against which the representatives of France and Germany protested. In the words of a good authority, they sacrificed individual liberty in order to exact passive obedience to a central authority. Such was the famous Council of Trent, which inaugurated a new epoch in literary as well as religious and political history. It made the Latin influence supreme, henceforth with an amended and remodelled Aristotle to rule over literature, and to be the law-giver of Parnassus. It was to mark the spirit and character of the so-called classic period which, though in its indistinct form attacked by poets and thinkers, ultimately became universally accepted.

§ 3.

It is amidst continual turmoil, the constant struggle of all against all, that ideas become slowly realised. The sixteenth century, if regarded from its social and political aspects, is one of the most unfortunate in history. Apart from its external elegance and free intellectual speculations, the mirage of distance producing the illusion of a golden age, there are many blunders or crimes, and their consequent ruin. People and princes, parties and sects, fight implacably. Reformers and their orthodox opponents are animated by a common passion of destruction. In the midst of the Renaissance one would almost think at times that there was a return to the darkest days of iconoclasm. Catholic priests thunder forth from the pulpit against the unholiness of the recently-exhumed masterpieces of antique statuary, and threaten the impious, who hesitate to reduce them to dust, with divine anger. The partisans of the Reformation go further ; Zwingli and his followers in Zurich destroy stained-glass windows, break down statuary, and cast illuminated missals into the flames. On entering All Saints' Church at Wittenberg, Carlstadt cried out in a loud voice the verse

from Deuteronomy: "Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven images:" and the treasure of Gothic architecture fell into the hands of a savage crowd. Under pretext of banishing from Christian worship all survivals of paganism, the zealous disciples of apostolic teaching yielding to a rage for destruction, surpassed the misdeeds of the Vandals and the devotees of the Crescent. Finally, on all hands the horrors of war prevail. The condottieri of the Italian republics are no less cruel than the fierce despots of Moscow.[1] Armies burn and ravage everything in their path. In cold blood whole provinces, without aim or end, are changed to deserts. We see nothing but falling cities and lands drenched with blood. In whatever direction we gaze we see invasion, pillage, and unbridled licentiousness.

This is true not only of Europe, but also of the recently-discovered regions of America, already subjected to the greedy passions of their conquerors.

§ 4.

Far distant from our continent, there were two very ancient but somewhat pagan civilisations living their peaceful and happy destiny. A double and fatal chance brought the priest-blessed caravels of Fernandez Cortez and Pizarro to the shores of Mexico and Peru. It was as if in one day a devastating fire had spread over these flourishing countries. Ignorant of each other, and of the origin of the new-comers, they were overwhelmed in common ruin and desolation. The former inherited great endowments and pure morality from the Nahuatls,[2] or the Mayas of Yucatan. Most of their

[1] The epithet which clings to the name of Ivan—"The Terrible"—but imperfectly represents the excessive atrocities to which he was led by his cruel disposition and the barbaric manners of his time.

[2] This eminently enterprising race of the Nahuatl group was less ancient than that of the Zapotecs, whose early origin is only now being discovered. It had in former times branches other than that established in Mexico, which are only known under the name of the Aztecs. The Toltec group had founded other centres of civilisation, Texoco, Tabasco, Chiapas,

sovereigns gloried in their poetic talent, or in the enlightened protection which they accorded to arts. The wealth of the town and the splendour of the monuments were in harmony with the fertility of the country. When Cortez first saw the capital of the Aztecs, the famous city of Tenochtitlan, he compared it to Venice on account of the striking beauty of its canals, winding round islands and constituting its streets. Fine buildings and massive ruins were to be found in these cities, their inscriptions recounting the primitive epics of these peoples; also there were valuable libraries and iconographical writings of considerable importance.

The other American civilisation, under the government of the Incas, had reached its highest intellectual and social development. The royal residence, dedicated to the almighty and sole deity, the sun, was at Cusco; this palace was a marvellous work of art. The natives, architects of no mean skill, had built handsome cities, erected superb monuments and buildings upon Cyclopean plans. At a time when the English, the proudest of European nations, had only practically useless roads, the Peruvians had long since intersected their empire with the most serviceable and perhaps the most wonderful highways ever made by man.

Civilisation was at this stage when the Spaniards appeared. They descended on these beautiful regions eager for booty and carnage. In the name of the gospel of the God of Mercy and Peace they continued for countless days killing, massacring, and pillaging. Streams of blood flowed in the towns and whole races disappeared.[1] In a few years the Mexican and Peruvian civilisations with origins in a distant past as ancient as those of Babylon and Nineveh were

and Guatemala, the capitals of which were destroyed by Alvaredo; also Yucatan, which possessed many opulent cities—Teotihuacan, Cholulo, Tula, Toluca, Xochicalo—superb temples, and magnificent palaces. This great Indian civilisation had reached its zenith in the ninth century, an epoch when the Toltec empire extended from the shores of the Gulf of Mexico to those of the Pacific Ocean, with a circumference of 6,000 miles.

[1] The inauguration of the great temple of Mexico was celebrated by a massacre of sixty-four thousand victims.

destroyed. Spain has never atoned for her crime in the eyes of the world.

The unheard-of atrocities committed in Mexico and Peru by the freebooters, grandiosely styled *Conquistadores*, were repeated again and again in Europe.[1]

[1] We must here insert a long and necessary parenthesis. It is now known that there were civilisations in the "New World" long before the discovery of Christopher Columbus. This is a point beyond doubt, especially owing to modern researches into prehistoric Mexico, founded on the earlier works of Humboldt, Brasseur de Bourbourg, Chevalier Waldeck, and Stephens.

In the United States, about 1860, the publisher, H. Bancroft, devoted a considerable part of his fortune to founding a library composed solely of documents dealing with the ethnology of the primitive populations of the district extending from Panama to Alaska, and especially of Central America, Yucatan, and Mexico. He himself wrote a voluminous work on the *Native Races of the Pacific States*, which opened up the way to American ethnology. No less active and persevering, John Wells Foster extended the field of his investigations, convinced by an inspiration of genius, that in the earthworks called *mounds*, such as are frequently met with in travelling from the Great Lakes to Mexico, and in Central America, as far as the Isthmus, accurate testimony lay hid of the very earliest "manifestations of the social life of America," he engaged upon numerous investigations with fruitful results. (Cf. Foster: *The Valley of the Mississippi*, the prehistoric races of the United States.) Other scholars hastened to follow in the traces of Foster, Gachet in Switzerland; Berendt Seler in Germany; Horatio Hale, Bowditch, Savile, Bandelier, Cushing, and others in the United States; Désiré Charnay, T. Hamy, and Lejeal in France. Under the patronage and energetic influence of a generous Mæcenas, the Duke of Loubat, some of these intrepid investigators accomplished for the so-called "New World" what Maspero, Morgan, Layard, Schliemann, Smith, and Delattre had done for the "Old World" in Asia Minor, Egypt, Assyria, and at Carthage. Many interesting revelations were the result. It was then shown that the "petroglyphs" exhumed from the soil in Central America are often identical in form and meaning with Egyptian hieroglyphs. It was made clear that, so far as the antiquity of the New World was concerned, close communications had existed between its aborigines and the peoples of Egypt and Asia Minor. Extremely remarkable comparisons were drawn between the religious ceremonies of the primitive peoples of Central America and those of India and China. Finally, the great success of these researches left no manner of doubt as to the co-existence of the races established in America and the races mentioned in the books of Moses.

Thus the destructive passion of Cortez in burning or pillaging the

§ 5.

The Inquisition was revived with sanguinary zeal. Its emissaries, the same terrible monks who followed the bands of Cortez and Tapia, had found in Mexico a grim remnant of an earlier civilisation in the form of gods hungry for human sacrifice and priests eager to offer them. The Inquisition wished nothing less than that the Spanish Christ, in whose cause the altar of Moloch had been restored, should in no way fall behind the ancient Mexican deity Huitzilopochtli in the matter of tortures and murders in the name of religion. At this the Inquisition perpetrated its greatest massacres and most extensive destruction. In Italy, Giordano Bruno, who anticipated somewhat enthusiastically the pantheism of Spinoza, perished in the flames. The Inquisition had set Spain in flames from end to end. The successors of Torquemada were legion—fierce executors of the *Instructions* which he issued in 1484 to serve as a guide in the sentences and acts of this fanatical tribunal. They exercised their pious ardour to such extent that the Moors became few and heretics disappeared. The Jews, however, survived, and from their hardy stock the Inquisition fed its fires; the sacred flame was not extinguished.[1]

The accounts of the religious and political wars of the sixteenth century reveal a general barbaric cruelty on every hand. Germany staggers under disasters which become even greater in the next century. In countries such as England in spite of the existence of a vigorous literature, moral advancement was very slow; the severity of the law was terrible, and everywhere there existed the heartless oppression of the weak by the strong.

Even Italy, which had been the source of inspiration for

libraries of the Aztecs, has not prevented modern science from reconstructing the history of this early race, and even that of their most ancient predecessors.

[1] Cf. Martin Philipson: *Origines du catholicisme*. Paul de Saint-Victor: *Hommes et Dieux*.

all countries, was the scene of disastrous and savage wars. On every side was heard the clash of drawn swords, and the angry voices of the disputing professors. However, the arts served as decorated background for these tragedies. The higher power ordained that they should be hindered in their progress.[1]

Though the earth might tremble, the flight of thought was not to be stayed. Even the sack of Rome failed to disturb Michael Angelo in his work. The constant struggle between Guelphs and Ghibellines, the many quarrels and civil wars between popes, barons, and emperors, did not separate the artist from his masterpiece. From end to end it was the wonderful age of Buonarotti and Ariosto, of Cervantes and Shakespeare, of Luther and Raphael, of Ulrich von Hutten and Erasmus, of Calvin and S. Theresa, of Machiavelli and l'Hospital, of Montaigne and Ignatius Loyola, of Cardano and Copernicus. What a wonderful meeting of creative minds, ignorant of each other's existence, having no other connection than the simultaneous nature of their work, and renewing all forms of knowledge and invention at one and the same time in France, Germany, and England.

§ 6.

At the first glance the political and moral situation in England does not present that aspect of civilisation which one would expect at the time of Shakespeare. The population hardly amounts to five millions, and stagnates under conditions of revolving inequality, fostered by the violence of the nobles, the profound demoralisation of the clergy, and the idleness of the lower classes. On the one hand there are the magnificent gardens and verdant lawns of the abbeys, of the majestic castle walls of the bloodthirsty baron ; on the other the miserable collection of huts which constitute

[1] People were dying of hunger in Italy, and yet the Pope went hunting and visited the theatre in the evening.

the village. There are endless marshes and wide expanses of heath, which cover the greater part of the country. Neither industries nor commerce exist to ward off the menace of famine. The inhabitants of town and country are a prey to epidemics and the victims of extortion.[1] Finally, ignorance among high and low was so great, that the majority of the peers of the realm were unable to read or write.

However, by way of extraordinary contrast, the dawning epoch was destined to be the golden age of English literature. The culture of art, introduced from abroad, and wonderfully favoured by certain spontaneous and powerful minds, quickly raised the level of education in a country which had lagged behind its rivals in Europe. Not only did the chivalrous fictions of the Troubadours penetrate the severe Anglo-Saxon atmosphere, and refine the roughness of the manners of the inhabitants ; but French books began to circulate, the current form of the language helping to spread them far and wide. Italian works, first known in French translations, were next quickly adopted and imitated. From Spain an opportune stimulus came to quicken the efforts of the great dramatic enterprises which were finally freed from the trammels of the mysteries and moralities offered in the Middle Ages to satisfy the coarse curiosity of the spectators. Now the lovers of study reflect the great light of the Renaissance. If the middle and lower classes remained in ignorance of the benefits of art and learning, there was, nevertheless, a considerable intellectual stir round the Queen and Court.

Edmund Spenser, chief of the rising lyrical school, stands at the head of the numerous writers of the Elizabethan

[1] The situation was, however, improving. Among the citizens a movement in the direction of liberty was manifest. Territorial wealth and property were changing hands to a great extent, and passing into those of the gentry ; that is to say, the minor nobility and the middle classes. The spirit of political liberty, which hovered as yet unconscious and vague over the continent, began to find a resting-place and sphere of action in every section of English society.

period. His delicate allegorical creations harmonise perfectly with the reigning fashion and taste at a time when perpetual mythology was the order of the day in the royal entertainments, games, and festivities. Spenser was not inferior to Ariosto and Tasso in his force of conception, wealth of imagery, and melodious rhythm. Next him comes Sir Philip Sidney, who seems to combine the refinements of the pagan Renaissance with the impetuous ardour of former times. A brave and brilliant knight, endowed with generous soul and chivalrous nature, he was the glory of his age. His works breathe the same high moral tone that he showed on the transactions of life. He was one of the most distinguished immediate predecessors of Shakespeare.

But the brilliance and power of the age lie chiefly in the direction of the drama, recently liberated from its early struggles for existence. The progress was rapid, sudden, and far-reaching. This drama, full of youth and strength, had its origin in a combination of widely different elements, dramatic liturgies, vague reminiscences of Latin tragedies and comedies, and clumsy adaptations of Italian and even Spanish works. It suddenly sprang up, grew, and spread with unsuspected stores of originality.

Those heirs of the Middle Ages, Lyly, Robert Green, Kyd, George Peele, prepared the way with their free and varied art. Following Christopher Marlowe,[1] who by his energetic verse dominates the whole Pre-Shakespearian group, comes Shakespeare himself, whose mere name conveys the idea of grandeur.

[1] Marlowe may be considered the predecessor of Shakespeare ; he might have rivalled him had he not been killed in a tavern brawl at the age of twenty-nine. He manifested in his work, and in his life, to a greater extent than any of his contemporaries the turbulent and reckless spirit of the age. It was an age of storm and endeavour that produced Shakespeare and his circle.

Modern criticism recognises in the noble characters of his dramas a subtle and powerful imagination, and a curious blending of the traditions of the Middle Ages, and the classical spirit of the Renaissance carried to

His early works date from 1587. Borrowing from his predecessors, from history, and from legend, he gives the finished product the seal of his powerful originality, beautifying with his genius his representation of the violent emotions and sanguinary horrors which the public of his day demanded ; he is afterwards in a higher and more individual art. He shows himself equally great and true in tragedy as in comedy—a penetrating and profound scrutineer of souls, spirited and accurate painter of character ; terrible, gracious, delicate, facetious, or sublime by turns, he brings upon the stage humanity in all its forms, under all its aspects, in all shades of its wonderful variety, with its virtues, crimes, vices, hatreds, tenderness, its joys and its sorrows, laughter and melancholy. His genius creates a terrible darkness and brightens it with a divine light, showing in striking contrast all human characters from the beggar to the king, from the little child to the old man.[1]

In order to exercise a powerful influence on the minds of their contemporaries, the English dramatists of the sixteenth century had merely to allow themselves to be carried away by the current of powerful passions of their age. To poets of genius, inclined to excess, temperament becomes almost their sole guide and strength. Hopeless love, grief, crime, madness, death, and such tragic images, haunt their minds perpetually and displace the simple ideas. Impelled by vague chances, or by the imperceptible currents of the time, their sensitive consciousness reflected with an almost inexpressible vigour the mental atmosphere in which they moved and had their being. There never had been a more favourable time for the expression of the pathetic. Among the descendants of Piers Ploughman and Robin Hood words flamed under the direct inspiration of events.

excess ; as, for instance, in *Dr. Faustus*, the first dramatic representation of Goethe's masterpiece, *The Jew of Malta* and *Edward II.*

[1] Cf. the vast Shakespearian bibliography, particulars of which are to be found in the *Transactions of the New Shakespeare Society* (England), and in the *Jahrbücher der deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft* (Germany).

They became as storms which alter moral standards and revolutionise society. We see the very life of England at the most momentous period of her history. It was her hour of peril, and the coming of the Spanish Armada, of the glory of Elizabeth, and that fierce religious struggle which ended in the downfall of Roman Catholicism. There were expeditions to the New World and the splendid exploits of those romantic heroes of travel and adventure, Drake, Cavendish, and Raleigh. For an uninterrupted period of sixty years the English drama was marvellously productive, exhibiting such a realistic conception of life that no subsequent effort has ever equalled. Ben Jonson followed Shakespeare, but did not adequately replace him. He gave, however, sufficient proof of his genius by the inexhaustible variety of his characters, by his sprightly and graceful gaiety and his profound pathos to merit the title "rare Ben Jonson." The Shakespearian inspiration was continued in the works of Beaumont and Fletcher,[1] Massinger,[2] Ford, Webster, Thomas and James Shirley.

Such men were living and working in England during the early part of the seventeenth century, while the ultra-elegant society of France was imbued with the spirit of pseudo-antiquity, and the elect assured themselves it was a country wandering in intellectual darkness and semi-barbarism.

Shakespearian tradition continued its impassioned vigour, when Puritan fanaticism burst forth, although by censures and attacks it had already manifested itself. The theatre, now in its infancy, offended the bigots. By pamphlets

[1] Beaumont and Fletcher wrote some sixty plays in collaboration. They were the successors of Shakespeare, and, though without his genius, worked with greater elegance. They had a knowledge of aristocratic life, and were gifted with worldly wisdom, and were at times preferred to Shakespeare by a frivolous and uncritical public. Dice has edited their complete works. (London, 1844, 11 vols.)

[2] This worthy heir of the fame of Beaumont and Fletcher, if not of Shakespeare, despite his talent, his qualities of style, and his success, ended his days in extreme poverty.

attacking the dramatists and in appeals to the authorities, puritanical writers had repeatedly clamoured for the abolition of the pleasures of the stage.[1] But their complaints were ineffectual amidst general indifference. The taste for dramatic works evinced by all classes increased from day to day, and the zeal of writers could hardly keep pace with it, so very powerful a hold had the love of theatrical representations over the minds of the masses. It was in vain that preachers in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. had redoubled their heated protestations against the works of perdition, which disturbed the peace of mind of the purists. They stirred up the fanatics, stormed and vituperated, until their hour came in due course. Just as effectually as the Catholic Inquisition checked all growth in the Spanish peninsula, so did the fierce ardour of religious reform, mingled with the passion for civil liberty, sweep away theatre and actors, and even the drama itself, in the violence of its attacks. The effect of this was to cast a gloom over everything, and, by forbidding dramatic representations, games, and plays, to bring to a standstill the wonderful progress of the English drama, which, in the opinion of Alfred Mézières, had in less than a century passed through all the phases of a long existence.

In Scotland, John Knox, the grim predecessor of Robert Burns and Walter Scott, had destroyed the harps of the minstrels. For two centuries the Scotch mind was fascinated by love for the theological syllogisms and charged with hatred for poetry and fiction. In England intellectual pleasures were sternly regarded. Only a few eloquent voices might be heard. John Hales, Chilingworth, Jeremy Taylor, Baxter, and Bunyan[2] were all that enlivened the

[1] In 1577 Northbrooke published a diatribe against the theatre. Two years later Gosson issued his *School of Abuse*, in which he ruthlessly condemned the whole dramatic art in the name of pagan philosophers as well as of the early Fathers and of Stoic and Christian morals.

[2] One of the most popular still in England is the *Pilgrim's Progress*, by the tinker Bunyan. It is a species of allegorical romance, the scenes of

chilling and severe tendencies of this gloomy epoch. There was no joy or serenity in life ; even laughter was forbidden to grace the lips.

The whole English nation was given over to religious and political disputes. The very soldiers discussed dogma, whilst students entering their class-rooms stopped to argue about the constitution. The Puritans walked about the streets with their eyes perpetually raised to heaven, while their hearts were full of bitterness. Their long faces, cropped heads, and sombre clothing harmonised with their harsh and unsociable temperament. What gloomy times were these !

But in every age unreasonable opinions have provoked the inevitable reaction. A Harrison is followed by a Rochester. We find after the uncompromising asceticism of the Puritan Revolution, succeeded by the great intellectual and social laxity of the Restoration.

§ 7.

To pass suddenly from England to Spain, from Shakespeare to Cervantes, would appear somewhat brusque. Nevertheless there are points of contact and resemblance between the nations. Their common spirit of adventure, the character of their national pride, which they foster, and the strongly-marked characteristics of their literature, constitute a real relationship.

We have already mentioned how Spain followed Italy in the Renaissance, and how her sons in great numbers fed from early childhood on wondrous tales, founded new homes in the countries of the semi-fabulous America, taking part in all sorts of expeditions and strange adventures, staining, alas ! with deeds of violence and rapine their own romantic chivalry.

Spain, wrapped in an atmosphere of heroic and pious

which are stamped with fantasy and mystic exaltation, but are by no means lacking in interest and grandeur.

exaltation, of visions and miracles, required some time to free herself from the trammels of the past, and to seek other sources as food for imagination than the supernatural and the marvellous. Somewhat weary, however, of always wearing the mantle of her ancestors, Spain eventually yielded to modern taste. The interminable legend of the *Cid*, and the *romancero* disappeared to make way for a school thoroughly imbued with Italian sensualism. Castilian arrogance vanished before the success of the wandering minstrels (*rhapsodists*) who visited the towns of the peninsula, singing the poems of Ariosto or declaiming the strophes of Tasso.

The stream of national literature was swollen by the flood of the Renaissance. Boscan and Garcilasco de la Vega adopt the metres of Petrarch, of the author of *Orlando Furioso*, and of Sannazar ; subsequently Ledesma and Gongora excel in the subtleties of their conceits (*concetti*). Verse is now, so to speak, the ordinary language of Spain. Poets are no longer counted, they are innumerable. If we pass rapidly over the crowd with a view to only considering the chief, we shall readily see that we are dealing with the "golden age" of the Iberian peninsula—the age of Cervantes and Hurtado de Mendoza, of Louis de Leon and Teresa d'Ahaumada, of Montemayor, of the great historian Mariana, of the cheery *picaresque*, tale-writers, of the inexhaustible Lope de Vega, with whom we shall shortly cross the threshold of the seventeenth century and prepare to meet Calderon.

While Italy loudly extols the *Aminta* of Torquato Tasso and multiplies the editions of the *Arcadia* of Jacopo Sannazar, Montemayor gives to Spain the most famous, if not the best, of his romantic pastorals : *Diana Enamorada*,[1] the success of which was prodigious. It was by modelling their work on

[1] This work appeared 1545. Montemayor left his work incomplete at his death in 1564. Peres produced a second part greatly inferior to the first. Gil Polo wrote a continuation in five volumes in the following century (1654), which was more appreciated.

the elegant fiction of Montemayor and Perez de Hita that the French novelists, and notably the most successful and most famous of writers of prose bucolics, Honoré d'Urfé, were soon to interweave the threads of their gallant romances with love. The banks of the Lignon were to take the place of the Esla, the great Druid speaks in place of the high priestess of Arici. But the framework remains exactly the same. Similarly, Shakespeare, yielding to the infatuation of his contemporaries for the pastoral, does little more in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* than put into dialogue the adventures of Felismene.

In the sixteenth and up to the beginning of the seventeenth century the fertile imagination of the Spaniards furnishes the rest of romance-speaking Europe with original invention and topics for fresh treatment from her superabundance of material.

Far above the rest towers Cervantes, the profound and ironical narrator of the exploits of the "Knight of la Mancha." He was a great man, but unfortunate, whose incessant toil and the laughter which he provoked from one end of Europe to the other, the victory he gained over vices and foibles, earned him neither money, esteem, nor consideration during his lifetime. He now occupies uncontested the literary throne of his country. He was a soldier of fortune, the knightly sport of chance, the captive of Arabs and Christians, a slave, maimed in battle, the plaything of Fate, of jealousy, and of malevolence. But his misfortunes or the injustice of others never altered his imperturbable good humour ; his own life was as strange as a novel. He put his whole heart and imagination into that remarkable and ever popular work, the *Adventures of Don Quixote*. It is jovial and philosophical epic, a quaint medley of heroism and triviality, a strange mirror of the manners, beliefs, and follies of a people, a contradictory amalgamation of fantastic thought and actual fact, of merry playfulness and secret bitterness, a general symbol of the contrast which will

always exist between the aspirations of noble minds and the commonplace reality of things. The immediate object of Cervantes had been to destroy the influence of the romances of chivalry, now out of date, and which had been carried so far to excess under Philip II. that the Spanish Parliament had been obliged to intervene and demand their suppression by the king. But Cervantes' finished work considerably exceeded his first plans, and the result became one of those masterpieces which are the common heritage of humanity.

This was also the most remarkable period of Portuguese literature, which had risen to the moral greatness of the country whence it had gained its inspiration. For a hundred years at least Portugal deserves to be considered as the standard-bearer of the civilised world. Indeed, Portugal is now at the zenith of her glory. Never again was she to see the unparalleled brilliance she had enjoyed during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This is owing to the genius of her princes, who formed a group unique in history and from whose bold initiative far less benefit was to accrue to their mother-country than to humanity at large.[1]

Her sailors maintain her supremacy in the Indies and at sea ; her poets and historians earn for her not less brilliant but more lasting distinction of another kind. We cannot forbear mentioning Bernardin Ribeiro, the skilful craftsman of rhythm, who with equal knowledge and imagination succeeded in making doubly valuable the endless variety of conception which his exquisite personality produced. He was the creator of the Portuguese pastoral ; his ideal country life inspires very numerous imitators. We must also cite the classic Saa de Miranda, who in the battles of the schools is repeatedly contrasted with writers of fantasy and romance,

[1] Without the energy of Henry the "Navigator," without the vast geographical knowledge of Pedro, heir to the throne, it is doubtful whether Portuguese discoveries would have assumed that extraordinary development which opened up boundless expanses to the commerce of the world and so greatly revolutionised the habits of modern nations.

and Gil Vicente, the Portuguese Plautus, who in his rude sketches has the honour of anticipating by nearly a century Lope de Vega and Calderon ; and lastly, supreme above them all, the great Camoens.

We must pause to appreciate Camoens, whose epic poetry is instinct with the sublime. Like Dante, Tasso, and Cervantes, in that his life was one of constant vicissitudes, he was compelled to engage in the bitter struggle against calumny, adversity, and ingratitude. Camoens passed the greater part of his life in distant voyages, and he ended his days when his country, whose praises he had sung, was about to submit to foreign domination. He rivalled Garcilasso in his *Eclogues* and Petrarch in his *Lyrical Poems*. No one can contest with him his title of "Portuguese Virgil," [1] when his great poem, the *Lusiades*, is considered, in which can be seen his greatness of conception, his perfection of style and his delightful harmony of versification.

In the North, Poland had no desire to be left behind the southern nations, and the kingdom of the Sigismunds laid claim to a large share of the splendour of the Renaissance, while her mysterious, barbaric neighbour, Russia, buried in eternal solitude, lay outside the trend of European affairs, and remained for long years at the epic age during the cycles of Kiev and Novgorod—that is to say, the age of wild impulse.[2] An abyss separated the Russians, these Asiatic Christians,

[1] In 1903 some French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese writers and artists founded the Camoens Society to encourage the study of the poetical works of the immortal Lusitanian.

[2] This "popular" Russian poetry (folk-songs), the complex result of successive ages and of an organic development which has continued almost up to the present time, has been recently brought to light by the labours of the Russian scholars Kinievski, Sakharov, Rybrikov, and Hilferding, and revealed to the western world by the work of Ralstoun, Bistrom, Damberg, and Alfred Rambaud. It produced considerable surprise among the folk-lorists, both on account of its abundance and its continuity. (Cf. A. von Keinholt : *Geschichte der russischen Litteratur von ihren Anfängen bis auf die neueste Zeit*, 1886, 8vo ; Naake : *Slavonic Fairy Tales* London, 1874 ; Alfred Rambaud : *La Russie Poétique*, Paris, 1876.)

from the Latins and Germans, the Christians of Europe. Poland, however, was a total stranger to Western ideas of any kind. She flattered herself on possessing great poets and distinguished prose writers. Eloquent speeches were to be heard in her parliament. Everything boded well at the dawn of this knightly period. The University of Cracow henceforth rivalled the most celebrated universities of Europe. Scholars of the first rank were its professors, notably Michael of Brudzewo, among whose pupils was the distinguished Copernicus. There are eminent writers in every branch of literature, such as Nicholas Rej, Kochanowski, John Zamojiski, and the impassioned Skarga. The most distinguished of these is Kochanowski. He laid touching and never-to-be-forgotten elegies at the tomb of his well-beloved daughter, and attained to Pindaric excellence in his odes. He also cultivated in turn epic and lyric poetry, satire and epigram, with a grace of diction and harmony of rhythm and a depth of sentiment which have gained him the name of prince of Polish poets. Disciples worthy of such a master flocked to his school. Unfortunately wars and invasions were soon destined to check this splendid effort and produce a notable diminution of inspiration and thought in this ancient Slav literature.

§ 8.

On the other European boundary are the Turks, a people whom one might well have supposed to be, from the records of their wanton destruction, still in a state of barbarism. This people showed by a sustained effort that they were capable of appropriating the languages and ideas of their new subjects as well as their territories. It was no longer the formless song stammered by the Tartars in their nomad life, but a genuine literature, which attained its apogee simultaneously with the military and political greatness of Solyman the Magnificent.

The Turks had profited nothing by their intercourse with the Greeks, and completely ignored their intellectual superiority. The ancient nation, regarded as the civilising agent of the world, could never boast of having inspired them with the love of her arts and literature. It had been different in their relations with the Persians and Arabs. The Caliphate at its fall had imposed its faith, its books, and traditions upon the Turkish hordes. They became changed, softened, and enlightened by this education. The Turks had drawn freely upon the masterpieces of Arab and Persian literature, and had borrowed from these rich stores all that they lacked in order, in their turn, to speak the language of poetry, of morals, of philosophy, and of science. They drank of the same fountain which had quenched the thirst of Khayyam, Hafiz, Saadi, and Djami. Poets were very numerous at Constantinople.

Greece had her age of Pericles, Rome her age of Augustus, modern Italy her age of Leo X., France her age of Louis XIV., and England her age of Elizabeth. Turkey regards the period of Solyman as her golden age. It was then that the mystic Fuzouli and the licentious Delibourade, who gained the epithet of the Ottoman Aretino, both flourished. Fuzouli [1] related the delightful love-tales of the Rose and the Nightingale, and decked his brow with the flowers which the immortal Baki left for him to gather. "The songs of Baki," cried the critic Ahdi, "are the admiration of the world, and deserve to be set up as a splendid model before the eyes of all men." His verse combines charm and depth ; the Ottomans in their enthusiasm, and knowing no higher praise, called him the "Sultan of lyric poetry." These days were indeed brilliant but short. Ottoman literature was never again destined to witness such an exceptional outburst of talent upon which historians still love to enlarge. Up to an epoch not very greatly removed

[1] He was also called Fazuli, and with the epithet "*kara*" or "black." He died 1553.

from our own the Turkish mind was to remain impervious to outside influences for a number of generations.

Let us return from the borders of the East to Europe proper, and again consider France, which we have temporarily neglected.

It is impossible to overlook her eagerness and the circumstances which resulted in her adopting from Italy the passion for ancient culture and to note how she moulded it according to her own taste and adapted it to her own temperament.

It was the dawn, though still vague and uncertain, of a period of wonderful changes.

The nation was gloomy, overcome with fatigue, weary of having fought and suffered much, and seemed eager to see its successors. Italy, subdued by the arms of Louis XII. and Francis I., had inspired the latter with brightness and enthusiasm. France welcomed these glorious enterprises, these revelations of art, this fuller knowledge of the possibilities of life with great joy. The early years of the century were but as the splendid promise of spring. The memory only of the sorrows and troubles remained. That the movement succeeded everywhere is chiefly shown by the achievement of great works. Pagan culture captured the language, the politics and philosophy, and introduced a totally different scheme of life and society.

While Clement Marot, a pleasing versifier, delights, on the one hand, in reviving the charm of Charles d'Orleans or in giving rein to his own poetic talent, Ronsard and his school, on the other hand, draw their inspiration from the works of Greece and Rome.

"The leader of this wonderful group of poets, called the Pleiad, which is known to us by the melodious verse of Baïf, du Bellay, Remy Belleau, was Ronsard. He reveals to an expectant France the works of Homer, Pindar, and Anacreon ; the name of the last is always associated with him."[1] Ronsard's great, but perhaps imperfectly digested,

[1] Emmanuel des Essarts.

learning somewhat impedes the flow of his verse and checks the flight of his naturally inventive, fruitful, and bold imagination, which is always full of life and enthusiasm. His magniloquent language betrays him on more than one occasion by its incongruities and by its brusque discordances. But when he is natural and gives rein to his twofold passion for art and nature, his pen writes only beautiful things. Are not wealth of expression, great and noble imagery, picturesque creations, charming details, exquisite thoughts, found in his work? His followers may imitate but do not equal him.

Under the Renaissance and the Pleiad fresh rhythms had been rapidly created in France, and thence spread throughout Europe. They were seized in their passage by the poets of Spain, Italy, and England, who, through them, were inspired to construct, with certain modification, their own system of prosody.

At the same time we see a genuine effort to raise the standard of the imaginative beauty of poetry to the same high level as that of verbal technicality—an effort destined to fall away from that height attained by Ronsard, and to relapse into the quaint graces of *Petrarchism*.[1] A wild eagerness for study seizes men's minds. "Studious youths born during the latter years of Louis XI.'s reign, whom scholastic education had left uneasy and dissatisfied, read eagerly and with a new mental attitude (the attitude of Poggio, Guarino, and Valla), the great Latin works, the deep meaning of which the Middle Ages had not penetrated, and of whose admirable form they were unconscious. To them is revealed what the monastic libraries had too long concealed, Lucretius, Tacitus, and Quintilian: a great philosophy, a deep psychology, and a noble rhetoric."[2] The title of humanist was sufficient in

[1] In the second half of the sixteenth century Philip Desportes reveals in the clearest manner this aristocratic deviation of the Pleiad, which led to a thoroughly intellectual delicacy, lacking in sentiment, and which degenerated into affectation.

[2] G. Lanson: *Histoire de la littérature française*, 4th edition, p. 221.

Italy to attract the attention of the lettered public and win for a man the favour of princes. Similarly in France, scholars and grammarians, as well as artists and poets, form part of the privileged circles surrounding Francis I. and his sister Margaret. Humanism runs to excess ; a number of Hellenising and Latinising enthusiasts incapable of original thought, introduce their ideas with a recklessness which becomes dangerous to the independence and correctness of the national tongue. On the other hand certain writers evince a remarkable sagacity in the reconstitution of texts, and the field of study is greatly enlarged. Erudition and classic philology, represented by Bude, Lefevre d'Etaples, Ramus, Julius and Joseph Scaliger, Muret, Daurat and Turnebus, were never before or since held in such high honour. Far above them Rabelais, the scholar and satirist, belonging to no particular school, in his strange work concentrates the two characteristic qualities of his epoch—mental vigour and deep learning. It is owing to his influence that prose attained its freedom and picturesqueness ; its budding perfection is acknowledged by all. The Greek and Roman authority, although somewhat disguised, is solely recognised in things dramatic—as, for instance, in the tragedies of Jodelle and Robert Garnier. These authors owed their celebrity, which they achieved during their life-time, to this fact. Ronsard praises the attempts of Jodelle as if he had already attained perfection, and had given to France the glory of having equalled Sophocles and Menander. This curious allusion, although somewhat embarrassing to us, must be accepted, as we fail to discover works more perfect and worthier of such high praise.

§ 10.

Under the later Valois kings literature turns to other sources for her inspiration. These are critical days for France, knowing no permanent control and torn as she is

by the opposing and Huguenot parties and divided apparently into as many mutually hostile factions as there are great families having military power. She drifts along in her irresolution, and we see her in turn favour and then burn the heretic ; smile at the daring of the free-thinker, and then re-kindle the fires of persecution ; formally anathematise the Italian influence, and yet borrow from Italy the amorousness of her poets and the licence of her morals. Further, the fury of the civil wars, the clash of arms, the orgies at Court, and the violent scenes of the League, give literature its sombre and war-like character. Montluc writes his *Mémoires*, called by Henry of Béarn "The soldiers' Bible," and d'Aubigné his grim *Tragiques*, in which the angry tone is never for a moment hushed.

Little by little the storm subsides and passes away. The old *esprit gaulois* is restored. The Renaissance produces a second and equally rich harvest. Montaigne, with his friends Charron and La Boétie, appear. Free from ordinary ambition and desirous above all that his existence should not be affected by the disturbances of his time, Montaigne endeavours to live his own life. He takes himself and his own feelings for his subject-matter. He notes day by day the reflections of a soul eager to acquire some knowledge of itself. His famous *Essays* are thus produced. He needs no further material. He will remain forever as a wonderful writer, with a lively and poetic turn of mind, a spontaneous style, and an inventive imagination, rich in original terms and picturesque expressions. His works are a wonderful source of inspiration, from which all may draw without their ever being exhausted.

CHAPTER XV

Dawn of the great classical period—Troublous times still—Vagaries of slavish imitation of Italy and Spain—Unsteadiness of purpose in literature—"Concettism," "Cultism," pedantry—Marinism, Gongorism, and *Estilo Culto*—Reaction of good taste and common sense—The seventeenth century at its zenith in France, in England—State of society after the sombre days of Puritanism—Complete reaction in favour of licence at the Restoration ; Striking outburst of the comic vein—State of Italian culture—Spain, Holland, and Germany—After the Thirty Years' War—Grave moral distress—The Franco-German period—Most European nations evince a similar love for imitation.

§ 1.

The year 1598, date of the Peace of Vervins, had marked the termination of the prolonged French and Spanish quarrels begun under Francis I. At the end of the same year Phillip II., the grim executioner, died. He was the last representative of his period, and that frenzy of bloodthirsty intolerance which ruined and stained the sanctuaries of orthodoxy with blood was buried with him. Europe entered upon a more peaceful period, during which progress was made.

The stormy sixteenth century had introduced the fever of discord and the bitterness of doctrine which characterised its history even into the religious writings of the compatriots of Calvin and Theodore de Bèze. When the gentle S. Francis de Sales followed the rugged theologians of the Reformation, we see the dawn of an era of conciliation. Man sought less excitement. The sacred ark reappeared when the floods subsided. The devotional spirit had almost

vanished from the world. It was relegated to the depths of cloisters, and, seemingly too uncouth, was no longer seen at Court. S. Francis de Sales undertook to reintroduce it along a path of roses.[1] Montaigne had successfully attempted to render morals and philosophy, which had hitherto been confined to the narrowness of the schools, generally attractive. This good prelate was equally successful when he made the religious life possible in the world of fashion. His gentleness was communicated to those around. France, free from the final conflicts of the League, and revived by the beneficial effects of civil and religious peace, looked forward, as in the early years of the last period, to tranquil development and unimpeded progress. In prose Guez de Balzac was one of the first to be witty and melodious, Corneille following Rotrou in drama, and Malherbe succeeding Régnier in lyric poetry introduced between them the great intellectual movement which was to attain maturity under Louis XIV.

The influence of Greek and Latin literatures in France during the sixteenth century has been compared to a tumultuous torrent bearing along many treasures in its rush but leaving considerable wreckage behind. Malherbe, a rugged artificer, without staying to gather up the jewels, endeavoured to repair the damage. He, as it were, constructed dykes, and the stream being checked in its reckless advance, was confined by force to its own channel.

In truth, the new age did not and could not at once attain that degree of perfection which was the privilege of the great classic school. It retained something of the ardour

[1] His chief work, *The Introduction to the Devout Life* (1608), translated and edited a hundred times, was originally written without any thought of publication, but solely for the spiritual guidance of certain great persons, among whom was Mme. de Chantal. The grave Bossuet, the gentle Fénelon, the vigorous Bourdaloue, and the impetuous Joseph de Maistre agree in praising the striking candour, the perfect tact, and the luminous treatment of the mysteries of the inner life, and despite his wonderful simplicity, his eminently practical character—in a word, the remarkable gifts of the great Bishop of Geneva.

and exuberance of the former period. Literature was, moreover, generally servile in its imitation of Italian and Spanish models, and shared, without perceiving their defects, all the vagaries of contemporary Italian and Spanish taste.

Imitation, indeed, was the prevailing fashion for the first part of the seventeenth century and permeated nearly all literatures. Marini, who came to France in the reign of Louis XIII., is an instance of a great talent descending to excesses and lacking in ordinary common sense. He infected society with his play on words, his elaborate periphrases, his witticisms and his inexhaustible flow of words. Being less ambitious to appeal to emotion than to astonish ; indifferent to matters of sentiment, reason, and probability, he makes his verses flash forth conceits (*concetti*) at every turn.[1] Marini was greatly enamoured of brilliant imagery, of the apposition of strange words, unusual combinations of ideas and unlooked-for effects ; he set a fashion which was rapidly adopted with great enthusiasm. Lope de Vega did not consciously exaggerate when he said that Tasso [2] was merely as "the day-dawn to Marini's sun." He was regarded as wonderful by reason of his surprising artistic skill and fertility of resource. In Paris, when he visited the nobility, he was welcomed as though he were the Prince of Condé. He celebrated the personal charms of Marie de Medici with such skill as to details that she pronounced him to be the truest poet in the

[1] See, if you have the courage, the *sonetti* and *canzoni* of the Marinists, and you will note how they talk of *a soul which weeps in the heart ; a heart dwelling in the eyes to behold their beauty, and which, while fleeing Cupid, falls a prey to his arrow ; eyes so imprudent as to lead a heart into combat where it can only encounter death ; eyes*, again, *which are black, or rather veiled in black, because they wear mourning for those whom they have assassinated*, &c. Kisses are by turns *a trumpet, a medicine, a fight, an offence ;* the mouth is *a gentle warrior, an agreeable prison and mordant coral.*

[2] This illustrious predecessor of Marini was himself attracted by a taste for dangerous ornament and an affected style. In Caillière's *Poetic War*, we read that Torquato Tasso "had several chariots loaded with *concetti* of various kinds."

world, and revealed her appreciation of him by extraordinary public attentions. In society, if he spoke or only made his appearance, the wits were forced to retire into the shade created by the presence of such a sun. He gave the keynote and furnished the model; he obtained such recognition that all European literature suffered in consequence.

Gongora, Montalvan, Gracian, and Ledesma in Spain had played the same part in giving a false and artificial meaning to every phrase.

Louis de Gongora was a man of lively imagination and creative talent, but he made his appearance at an unfortunate literary period. A fatal despotism had fascinated the intellect in mere words and phrases without ideas. His first work was a collection of poems which, although simple in form, were noble, and even majestic, in tone, and quite without exaggeration.[1] But they only gained him a trifling reputation and the title of "Chaplain to His Majesty." He longed to distinguish himself, and so leaving the beaten track he adopted "*Cultorism*" with such energy that in his first attempt he easily surpassed his predecessor, Louis de Sotomayor. He invented a new style, almost a new language—one overweighted and bristling with neologisms, obscure allusions, extravagant metaphors and forced inversions.[2] Gongora and his disciple Montalvan might well rejoice, for their system made their fortunes. We see this strange, much embroidered

[1] See his *Ode on the Invincible Armada.*

[2] As an example of his metaphorical language we shall only cite a single instance. In one of his odes he gives the title of "Duke of Streams" and "Viscount of Rivers" to the river of Madrid.

"Mançanarès, Mançanarès,
Os que en todo el aguatismo,
Estois Duque de Arroyos
Y Visconde de los Rios."

He apparently dared not call this petty river, dried considerably by the summer heat, "a grandee of Spain." A Spaniard, passing one day by chance when it was dry, and seeing how superfluous was the fine bridge built by Philip II., remarked wittily that the bridge ought to be sold to buy water: "*Es menester vender la puente por comprar agua!*"

phraseology, highly coloured and tinselled (termed *estilo culto*), develop and then degenerate into absurdity.[1] There was a species of challenge between the Spanish and Italian poets (without prejudice to the rights of the Portuguese,[2] who claimed the *estilo culto* as their own particular property), as to who should cram into the space of a line the maximum number of incongruities, the most unexpected antitheses, or the most enigmatic feature. The "*agudezas*" constituted a refinement on the "*concetti*." To be effective was the sole desire and the single and infallible means of attaining it, dear alike to Gongorists and Marinists, was to manipulate the unexpected and surprising. Poets forgot to appeal to the soul and to stimulate the mind, but they counted it a triumph if each verse struck the reader with astonishment !

All European culture was almost simultaneously affected with this brand of bad taste, which was regarded as the most refined, most elegant, and the loftiest expression of the mind.

"Concettism" in Italy, the "Euphuism" of Lyly in England, "Cultorism" in Spain, the pedantic mannerisms of Hoffmanswaldau and Lohenstein in Germany, and the affectations of the "coteries" in France, would seem to have combined between themselves an offensive alliance against reason and naturalness. Even serious England had welcomed with universal admiration the appearance of "*Euphues*," the vade-mecum typical example and charming but infectious model of this phase of literature. English prose as Ascham and Wilson had left it was heavy and monotonous, hence the welcome and extraordinary favour accorded to this serious and pedantic novel, for it opportunely introduced a hitherto unknown element of elegance, of subtle ornament, and of harmony.

[1] Lope de Vega called it wittily "*culto diablesco.*"

[2] See the great *Histoire de la littérature portuguaise*, by Théophile Braga, the volume on the "*Culteranists*," entirely devoted to the adepts of the affected Spanish style.

Edward Blount, the publisher of Lyly's works, says in his preface to them: "Our nation is in his debt for a new English which he taught them. *Euphues and his England* first began that language; all our ladies were then his scholars, and that beauty in Court, which could not parley euphuism, was as little regarded as she which now there speaks not French." To speak about all things with refinement was the sole ambition of this ultra-pedantic literature which was contemporaneous in France with the Hôtel de Rambouillet, where poetry was cultivated by a select circle. Affectation had even extended to private correspondence, in which so often the artificial spirit is banished by the charms of intimacy. The cultured delighted in revealing the flower of their talent in their private letters, and thought to excel in adapting the gist of the most unimportant communications to the capricious taste of the day. Epistolary style was by no means destined to become, to speak correctly, a style apart; it was tinged with pedantry, as was social intercourse or the most trifling efforts of the Muse. The punctilious manners of the boudoir, expressed in endless gallantries, were elaborated in verse with such extreme care that the effect was often ridiculous. Play upon words was held as highest art; yet witticisms, good and bad, were manufactured to such an extent that they became quite commonplace. Finally, matters went so far that common sense reasserted its claims, and, as usual, triumphed in the end.[1]

The Italian "*pensieri*" and Spanish "*cultoristos*," who had been the promoters of this infatuation for the subtle and affected were compelled to change their style because the public had ceased to show any interest in the meaningless

[1] French authors, such as Voiture and the Chevalier de Méré, following the taste which prevailed between the publication of *Astrée* and *Clélie*, are found agreeing with the pompous Guez de Balzac. Euphuism (Préciosité) cultivated by the pedants in France, had been practically killed by Molière's mocking satire, but it died more slowly elsewhere, especially in England, the home of *Euphues*. It dominates the works of Cowley and Waller, and to a certain extent even Milton.

sighing of their artificial love-making. This excessive refinement had enjoyed the favour accorded to novelty. It had, moreover, an indirect influence in moderating the roughness of contemporary manners and imparting to them a certain urbanity. Its vogue ceased, as did other fashions imported from beyond the Pyrenees, but while it lasted a mania for things Spanish raged in Paris. Gradually the public learned to discern the difference between mere glitter and true brilliance, and sought a less questionable accomplishment in a less complicated style of writing and speaking.

Simplicity was now very generally desired. This developed into a somewhat solemn academic style, which was to characterise the French literature of the seventeenth century.

§ 2.

Literature frees herself from the trammels of pedantry, affectation, and excess. One after another the foreign influences which had temporarily affected the national literature are cast off. Taste and style become purer, and the literary ideal neither pedantic, affected, nor exaggerated. Little by little is acquired that tempered form and substance, that blend of ancient and modern, of truth and elegance by which one may distinguish the best works.

The social tendency and a fine taste for conversation so characteristic of the French people, were furthered by the fashionable *salons* and the prevailing love of verbal analysis. Society under Louis XIV. may be summed up under these two heads—an ultra-refinement of manners and a high standard of literature.

It was now the particular period of a refined and cultured society, when even the members of the Court circle sought the favour of an introduction to "Arthenice"; when the noblest born, with a sprinkling of pedants and blue-stockings, were wont to assemble at the house of Catherine de Medici, Marquise de Rambouillet and her daughter Julie d'Angennes.

In that assembly were to be seen Malherbe, Racan, Mme. de Savigné, Mme. de la Fayette, the "great Condé," Cardinal de la Valette, Bussy Rabutin, Mlle. de Scudéry, Tallemant des Réaux, Voiture La Rochefoucauld, Corneille, Godeau, and many others. Discussions and conversations never failed when they had as topics the purification of the language, or the fashionable novels produced by their favourites Gomberville, La Calprenade, or Scudéry. It was necessary to consider seriously this unofficial academy of wits, for their decisions had singular influence in procuring literary success or renown. It was almost necessary to be seen at the Hôtel de Rambouillet in order to attain celebrity, honour, or even credit. We have already remarked that this refined and gallant world, enamoured of literature and entirely devoted to the pleasures of the mind, degenerated into affectation; but we have also said that common sense triumphed over the passing mannerisms imported from Italy and Spain. Some permanent result of this literary culture may, however, be found in the greater purity of the language.

Under the double influence, but in different spheres, of the Hôtel de Rambouillet and the French Academy,[1] the latter recently founded by Conrart, recognised by Royal edict, and created an official body by letters patent from the Cardinal-minister,[2] a sense of proportion, delicacy, and distinction begin to be felt in literature as well as in society.

The language of the preceding century had been characterised by remarkable instability. It was original, interesting, varied, and full of happy licences, but on the other hand lacking discipline, uncertain, variable, freely abandoned to

[1] "The French Academy," writes Pellisson, "was only established by the King's edict in 1635, but we date its beginning some four or five years previously and acknowledge that its foundation was in some sense a matter of chance."

[2] Richelieu had de Thou put to death and caused the *Cid* to be hissed, but for the love of those who in him glorified the author of *Mirame*, he founded the most famous and longest-lived of literary circles under the title of "The French Academy."

the caprice of authors. It differed from north to south, from province to province ; words were taken from Greek and Latin, from Italian and Spanish, the variety being in proportion to the number of authors, each of whom was desirous of using his own words and phrases and exhibiting his individual manner. These perpetual changes in construction and spelling were long to defy the efforts of the grammarians. The want of unity and regularity was felt at last. Vaugelas, at the head of a number of reformers, set to work. Under the successive regulations of the Academy, unfortunately carried to excess in many instances, the terminations, hitherto inflexible, assumed fixed forms. Syntax was codified and vocabulary became more restricted and defined. Balzac, as previously noticed, had already endowed the language with harmony and variety. The writers of Portroyal were fitted to continue his work, rendering it less pompous and emphatic and simplifying it in theory and practice. Ideas insensibly became more precise, and by a natural and easy process of evolution grew purer.

Philosophy remained under the care of the scholastics who systematically restrained individual effort and devoted all their endeavours to routine study. The Renaissance had set up the authority of Plato. An attack on scholasticism followed, quite ignoring any good points of the system, but nothing was proposed in its place ; ideas were evolved mechanically and aimlessly. Descartes then appeared. As if on wings he burst through formula and tradition, and by the magic of his thought opened up a pathway for the captive reason of mankind. Starting free from all preconceived ideas, he began that revolutionary movement which marked the passing away of external authority and the recognition of conscience ; in other words, the substitution of the modern spirit for the scholastic ideal.

Further, in using the national instead of a classical language in his writings, Descartes did for philosophy what

Luther in Germany and Calvin in France had brought about for theology. He thereby assisted considerably in fixing the language of a whole country in every department of thought.

"Eloquence," as Nisard says, "is that art which commands all other arts and which does not wish to please by the purity of its language, but undertakes to persuade by force of its doctrine and by brilliance of its reasoning." Eloquence became law, the universal necessity, and the ideal of men's minds.

The further we advance in the seventeenth century and study the works of the great writers (those of the second rank being very inferior), the more certain it seems that we enter a great period. We see the highest intellectual perfection—unity in variety. This classic age appears absolutely uniform in effect, but it offers to a close investigator a wonderful complexity of figures. How many shades, differences, and even marked contradictions may be found among such men as Boileau, La Fontaine, Pascal, Fénelon, Bossuet, Bayle, Racine, Gassendi, La Bruyère, Bourdaloue, and Saint-Simon; the last that terrible painter of portraits whose double privilege it was to be the most famous literary figure of the end of the seventeenth century and also one of the most distinguished representatives of the eighteenth.

We should like to linger in such company and to inquire at length concerning these authors and their works; to show once again that in Boileau it was the aggregate and happy working together of mediocre qualities that raised him to the front rank; that La Fontaine could imitate so much yet remain inimitable. Again, we should like to demonstrate the resourceful genius of Molière, who contrived to mingle such profound thought with so much sprightliness, and although melancholy himself, to give to the world examples of the most perfect comedy; to show how Racine, although hindered by the artificial limits of tragedy, succeeded in depicting all the emotions of the human soul, and faithful, to

his idea of the perfection of beauty, was able to exhibit truth under radiant and immortal form. We should further like to appreciate the eminent skill of La Bruyère with his subtle realisation of the manners of his time, and to compare Fénelon to Virgil. We might stay to portray with a few rapid strokes the greatness and the pettiness of Bossuet, that philosophical theorist, a great Churchman and at the same time a statesman and flatterer of princes. He rivals Plato in his mastery of human language, Corneille in his grasp of the pathetic, and was like Saint-Simon in the range of his sympathy; he may be ranked with Voltaire as possessing the great gift of appreciating the practicalities of life, though he used it in the furtherance of very different causes.

We have scarcely touched the surface of the seventeenth century in France. More eloquent pens than ours have already dealt with this splendid period in a way we could never hope to equal, and impossible within the compass of this work.

France obtained, owing to the soundness of her foreign policy and the organisation of her home affairs, a great influence in European politics. The brilliance of her literary and artistic achievements served to increase this influence.

This pomp of monarchy and display of brilliant intellects did not entirely conceal the existing social distress. History can never ignore the violence, the outrages, and misfortunes which formed the background of this splendour. The public abuse of power and of credit, the haughtiness of the ruler and the servility of the courtiers, the financial corruption in the higher circles while the lower classes suffered extreme poverty, especially in the country districts, where "the people for lack of bread did feed on grass." The reverses endured by the French armies during the League of Augsbourg and their constant humiliation during that of the Spanish Succession can never escape the historian. The general dragooning of a great people and the dispatch

of cavalry to convert by fire and sword the freemen of Languedoc "to the purity of the Catholic faith" is recorded for all time.

For all this Louis XIV. and his reign remain of great importance. Fortune had determined that this prince, reaping the results of Richelieu's political genius and by using the talents of Mazarin, should leave his kingdom greater than ever before, even after her disasters, and that by associating his own glory with the results of a wonderful outburst of genius, their three names should henceforth be inseparable. Personally, however, his ignorance was great; he never opened a book.[1] His people for generations were oppressed, suffered, and finally disappeared. France remembers little else but the satisfaction afforded to her national pride and public safety when the excellence of her writers was admitted by all the other nations and the recognised preponderance of her language resulted in making it the diplomatic tongue of Europe.

§ 3.

Nevertheless foreign literatures were not inactive. It was the age of descriptive and lyric poets in England[2]—from Drayton the ingenious author of the *Polyolbion*, in which his dull, prosaic style spoils his most ambitious efforts, to Edmund Waller, the Malherbe of his country and precursor of the Classical School, and Dryden, that man of universal knowledge.

At this point the source of inspiration was changed; an entirely new spirit modified the trend of thought—a spirit differing from that which spurred on the progress of the

[1] "What is the good of reading?" he asked one day the Maréchal de Vivonne.

[2] Among all these versifiers Crashaw and Henry Vaughan accomplished wonders of obscurity and complexity. Only one of them was really distinguished, namely, Robert Herrick, a distant follower of the poet Martial and the charming author of the *Hesperides*, 1648.

Renaissance in England and owing to which she had been thoroughly permeated with the influences of "Petrarchism" and convention. The notion of uniform excellence introduced into France by Boileau, crossed the English Channel and conquered England. The worst excesses of that generation were restrained; symbolism and impressionism, so favourable to all the caprices of an unchecked fancy, disappeared with the fantasies which delighted the imagination of a former period. Men's minds recovered from the excitement and were submitted to a wise and formal discipline. Dryden decided that poetry should have no other laws than the rules of classical Latin as interpreted by Scaliger and Casaubon.

He with his defects and imperfections characterised in an active manner this age of transition. Born between the two periods, he oscillated between two forms of thought, and missed perfection in both. Yet his work was not in vain; he founded criticism and good style. He was one of the first to furnish models of an easy, vigorous, and truly modern style of writing.

Sublime ideality still prevailed in Milton, now, however, aged and rudely surprised by the Restoration in his dream of an austere republicanism. Between 1661 and 1667 he raised the "triple sumptuous structure"[1] on which his glory as the first of heroic modern poets rests forever. He completed the vast composition which places him on a level with Dante and Homer, which links him with the Bible and ranks him with the great Jewish prophets. He remained the stubborn politician and sublime poet who was capable, even under the check of Puritanism, to feel and express so great a love of beauty. He is the admirable exception which proves that the human soul can remain free despite all preconceived systems or the crushing force of circumstances.

This liberty was proclaimed by the genius of Milton

[1] *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*.

in his admirable prose-writings,[1] by the eloquence of Sir John Eliot, and found a Utopian enthusiast in James Harrington and a no less impassioned apostle in the unfortunate Algernon Sidney. It was, however, but a flash in the storm.

The day of the Republic is over. A different note is heard in literature. Milton's *Paradise Lost* appeared in 1667 as a protest of outraged moral, of Puritanism persecuted and conquered. By a curious coincidence the famous *Hudibras*[2] of Samuel Butler, the Don Quixote of England, was published almost the same year, deriding and ridiculing the Roundheads and Presbyterians, the political and religious party who had effected the revolution, from the opposite point of view. The Stuarts re-ascended the blood-stained throne of their ancestors. Charles II. inaugurated his reign by giving the signal for a complete and general reaction towards pleasure after the sombre days of Puritanism. What a sudden metamorphosis! One might well feel transported to another epoch under another sky. The language changed with the manners. Life at the English Court resembled in every respect that of the French. Tastes, amusements, fashions all recalled Paris, Versailles, and St. Germain. Under Charles II. balls, excursions, gambling festivities, and gallant ceremonies followed each other in a close succession of ceaseless pleasure. Emulated by the King's example, men and women spent their lives in intrigues as shamelessly public as those we read of in their books and seen in the contemporary drama.

This merry monarch, "scandalous and poor," who let his crown in return for a yearly grant and bartered away his own

[1] See Symon's edition of Milton's prose-works.

[2] The Puritan knight Hudibras and his squire Ralph were indeed inspired by the two characters of Cervantes. Butler, much inferior to the Spanish author in elegance, imagination, variety, and natural wit, is yet worthy of study as an exponent of manners and character, as a striking type of that humour which is the essential characteristic of English thought.

sister, encouraged such poets as the Earl of Rochester, who died at thirty-three, exhausted by excess, or Edmund Waller, the refined sceptic and accomplished type of indifferent morality and of political versatility.[1] He loved the unblushingly coarse comedy and boundless audacity of Wycherley, who for many years enjoyed the Royal favour, but who fell upon evil days by reason of his own carelessness regarding the practical side of life. He was detained in prison seven years for debt, whence he was rescued by James II. and pensioned, thus affording us an extreme example of the shamelessness of the Restoration manners. His dramatic situations and dialogue are of unblushing immorality, his characters a strange medley of English types in French dress, and, while following Molière, he gives but a poor imitation of him. Despite his unmitigated coarseness he leaves behind him vivid sketches and remarkably expressive portraits of the manners of his time.

One of the first consequences of the relaxing of Puritan fanaticism was the return of liberty to the stage. It degenerated at first into extreme licence; there was a corresponding excess in literature and manners. It was a striking change among Englishmen of the Restoration period whose fathers so recently had challenged scrutiny by their austere dress and demeanour! The Puritans at first fled from the towns, ashamed and despised. Throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain the lower passions were unchained, a refined licentiousness was manifest at Court and a terrible outbreak of brutal lust among the populace. A crowd of wild, undisciplined people witnessed the production at Drury Lane which reflected the audience in a strikingly vivid manner. This nation, so grave and reserved, so unperturbed by passing political distur-

[1] He sang the virtues of the Lord Protector, his cousin, in a panegyric which has remained famous, and he strove therein to defend him; when the wind veered he turned with it, and used his poetic talents to procure his own advancement.

bances, seems to have gone mad. There was a wild determination to secure enjoyment equally true of the "merry monarch," the noble lords, and the gay beauties of Whitehall. What subjects and what pictures could better please a public than comedy in which too truthful mirror all its excesses were reflected?

From the distant parts of the kingdom we see a crowd of burgesses, nobles, soldiers, sailors, and provincials with their wives, hurrying to London to indulge in the spectacle of unbridled licence. They paid little heed to the insanitary conditions of the metropolis, or to the epidemics which raged there, but crowded and jostled one another at the entrance of the theatres.[1]

To comprehend the tastes and passions of this motley society, paraded shamelessly in all their coarseness, we must study the comedies of Wycherley and his successors, Farquhar and Vanbrugh, or of Congreve. He, the "Beaumarchais of England," depicted the times better and more accurately than the delicate paintings of Hamilton, who was partly French; or again, the life, minutely detailed, may be found in *Pepys' Diary*.

The outburst of comic talent in the reigns of Charles II. and James II. was really marvellous. The English never subsequently produced so many gifted dramatists or attracted to the theatre such large and appreciative audiences.

This crisis in the English dramatic and social life continued until it gradually subsided, and ended somewhat abruptly during the reign of William III. It lasted until the theologian, Jeremy Collier, rallying round him the discontented Puritans, proclaimed himself their leader, and declared war, in the name of public opinion, on the licence of the stage. He spared neither Congreve nor even Dryden, least of all Wycherley and his merry rival, Thomas d'Urfey. People were glad of this reaction. He profited by this to increase

[1] See A. de Grisy, *History of the English Comedy in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 11.

his demands, going to the length of making dramatic authors responsible for the misfortunes of the nation and the decline of Royal influence. The public listened to what he had to say, and believed him. His vigorous pamphlet[1] exercised sufficient influence to set up a fresh standard of dramatic morality. The English mind which, owing to a sudden transformation of taste and ideas, had lost something of its strong self-control, returned to its normal condition after a period of excess. Comedy lost its vivacity. On the other hand, departments of literature more adapted to the national temperament were developed and extended. The novel now imperceptibly replaced the drama, and at the same time encroached upon poetry, which decayed in proportion as prose assumed an important place in fiction.

Prose, it must be noted, is now systematically developed. It produces writers of distinction and of singular originality, such as the strange moralist Robert Burton.[2] Bacon, at the beginning of the century, and later on Hobbes, composed their great philosophical works in Latin ; but the philosophers and scholars who succeeded them address the general public in their own language. Did not Bacon himself in his *Essays* present his ideas in most picturesque and elaborate English ? It is no longer essential to point out the enormous influence of the works of Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam, on modern times.[3] Eaten up by ambition and lacking uprightness and conscience, his character, in the pursuit of his ends, proves sadly inferior to his genius. From the intellectual point of view he was a man of great importance—a seeker after

[1] *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*, 1698–1699.

[2] Burton was a man of strange character—retiring, uncertain, and melancholy, but with flashes of noisy mirth. He analysed these contradictions of his mind in a work of singular power, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, by Democritus Junior (1621, 8vo). Its quaint, original fancies are mingled with numerous quotations to which they serve as links. Sterne and Swift drew inspiration from Burton.

[3] *Life and Letters of Francis Bacon*, by Spedding, 1861–1874.

knowledge and an indefatigable worker. Bacon rescued his philosophy from the formulæ of scholasticism and combined it with the study of facts. He drew up an elaborate classification of human knowledge ; and if he were not the founder of a new method, as he claims, it is impossible to deny that he was largely instrumental in demonstrating the possibilities of induction.

Bacon developed the prose essay, that typical feature of English literature. Half a century later there are writers who enrich this form of humoristic dissertation with a startling brilliance of metaphor, an easy flowing style, a rapidity of thought, and conclusions of surprising boldness. Addison and Richard Steele were soon to extend the essay to the region of polemics.

We are now approaching the reign of Queen Anne. This is the classic era of English literature with a dignity, elegance, and manners of its own. Henceforth England ranks with the foremost nations by reason of her prosperity at home, her influence in Europe, and of her productions in the fine arts and in literature.

§ 4.

The period was far less favourable to Italian culture. Italy in the seventeenth century is really a nation in decline. Had her genius, we may ask, been temporarily exhausted owing to a too prodigal and hasty production ? We seem to enter, as it were, a stifling atmosphere, where there is no vivifying air to inspire masterpieces in any number. The language changes and becomes less brilliant. Madrigals, conceits (*concetti*), witticisms, and far-fetched similies re-appear on all occasions. Clumsy imitators have succeeded Guarini who founded a style full of pedantic mannerisms, and the above-mentioned Marini, the "famous cavalier," he who had successfully disputed with the Spanish *cultoristos* for pre-eminence in silly, extravagant language.[1] We still find men

[1] Cf. Francesco de Sanctis : *Storia della Letteratura italiana*, vol. ii. ; Menendez y Pelayo : *Historia de las ideas esteticas en España*, vol. ii.

of talent worthy of notice; some even of admiration. Chiabrera, Guidi, and Filicaja strive to rise superior to the prevailing bad taste in their lyrics. Salvator Rosa and Boccalini display vividness and wit in their satires; Alessandro Tassoni finds the elements of a masterpiece in the humorous style dear to Berni. But these instances appear isolated when we compare them with the mediocrity of the numerous authors who render barren the subjects they introduce from the French. Vigorous works treat of special subjects for the most part, such as philosophy and science, and are frequently written in Latin. Among the most famous authors are Galileo, Cassini, and Torricelli.

Spain in her political decline, despite the morbid torpor prevailing in her Royal palaces, despite the unpatriotic action of her priesthood, and despite the poverty and general distress which destroyed the vitality of the people, preserved more of her literary genius than did Italy.[1] During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Spain produced an enormous number of works dealing with dramatic or romantic subjects.

It would be difficult to obtain more convincing evidence of the statement that the drama accurately reflects the general state of society than that furnished by the Spain of the period. As a nation the Spaniards have always evinced a love for spectacles. The stage in the seventeenth century became its ruling passion. Religious drama especially appealed to the heart and senses of the populace. A host of "miracle-plays" pleased this people, ignorant and credulous. Learning repelled them, criticism wearied them, and they much preferred legend to argument, a play of Notre-Dame del Pilar or San Isidor, with miracles on the stage, to scientific discovery. The "*autos*" provided them in abundance; the heavens opened, the sun of glory and love illuminated the elect, and there were visions of the celestial

[1] "American gold," said one of her historians, "only traversed Spain in order to enrich other nations."

regions. A number of religious pieces analogous to the French mysteries, dedicated to the Virgin, the saints or patron-saints of the various towns, charmed the popular imagination. These pieces are characterised by ferocity towards heretics, unbelievers, and unorthodox persons, but show great indulgence to the generality of sinners and evil-doers. A rigidly theological education had instructed authors —for the most part clerics and priests—to exalt the merits of the Church, her martyrs and adherents in their plays. There was any quantity of rich material for them. The composition of their pieces demanded unity of plan, but only a rough-and-ready logic in the development of the characters. Dramatists did not hesitate to multiply transformation scenes in order to please the people, who, while outwardly devoted to Christianity, retained their pagan instincts.

Some did not limit their efforts to the production of "*autos*," or religious dramas. The more talented sought in real life the secret of the deep emotions and the unforeseen which makes such strong appeal to heart and mind. From comedy they drew the variety of situations, the ingenious elaboration of intrigue and natural gaiety such as readily raise laughter.

Calderon's fame grows, and he occupies an important position as dramatist. His works reflect unconsciouly traces of oriental genius, and have an extensive range from the gay love-intrigue to the darkest passion. Some of his comedies are exquisite idylls of a light and airy character; certain of his dramas, on the other hand, show a brutal strength, in which the dialogue, abrupt and clashing, obtains striking effects. By aid of his observant mind he enriched the romantic form with philosophic thought. His wonderful talent and vigorous inspiration enable him to handle ideas and tenacious principles which ever haunt the Spanish mind, moulding them to the changing ideals of art. By the permanent results of these qualities he belongs both to the present and future ages.

His rivals, Lope de Vega, John Ruiz de Alarcon, Tirso de

Molina, and Guillen de Castro, some years previously, or simultaneously, strove with less ability to accomplish the same task—a task consisting in giving to the coarse and halting drama of Naharro and Lope de Rueda that literary individuality so original and characteristic of the Spanish drama. Tirso de Molina ranks next to Calderon and Lope de Vega, if not next to the genial Alarcon, whose unhappy fate it was to be only admired and understood two centuries after his death. His plays are strange and irregular, but full of life, and witty; they show real comic force when the fun is not too coarse and heavy. Moreover, he only regards the theatre as providing means to charm the eyes and an outlet for his poetry. Lope de Vega's conception of the drama is wider. He endeavours to be true to life, and to obtain a real and sound psychological basis for his work, at least in so far as the fabulous rapidity of his writing affords him time. In his unconsidered compositions there are some admirable scenes. His poetry is more voluminous than that of Tirso de Molina, and surprises one occasionally by the greatness of some of his conceptions.

But Spanish imagination was confined entirely to the drama. Considerable talent was shown in other branches of literature. The classical writer, Antonio de Solis, seemed to have assumed the pen of Mariana. He graces history with the charm of the novel. Historians, encyclopedists, and political writers were as numerous as casuists. Escobar and his school, the great spiritual guides in matters of conscience, were unrivalled in the skilful manner in which they reconciled worldly interests with the claims of religion, or by the aid of punctilious explanation and specious argument rendered almost righteous and defensible some terribly elastic maxims on doing evil deeds and preserving the outward appearances of good. The licentiousness of the "picaresque" style increased simultaneously with the growth of theological sophism.

In the sixteenth century Hurtado de Mendoza and his

contemporary, Mateo Aleman, had inspired a special literature dealing with the representation of popular types of the peninsula, the one by his humorous masterpiece, *Lazarillo de Tormès* (1553), the other with a highly entertaining tale, which we may assume to have been more or less his biography, *The Adventures of Guzman d'Alfarache* (1599). The "picaresque" becomes a favourite style. It reflected only too well the contemporary state of society—a state resulting from the reckless spirit of adventure, monkish hypocrisy, and the idle habits of all classes. Distress ruled this land of wealth, already a land of hunger. No longer was there booty to be divided as after the American expeditions. Feverish ambitions had long since deterred Spanish nobles and wandering minstrels alike from work. In order to live without work people trusted to tricks, artifices, and strokes of fortune. Things were ruled by favour and managed by intrigue. Adventurers of high or low rank, needy gentlemen, alguazils, Bohemians, students, loose women, valets, thieves, ruffians, rogues, vagabonds and beggars, one and all lived by their wits and imposture. It was gentry of this type and character whom the authors, meeting at every step in the large towns of Spain, painted. They afforded inexhaustible material for such writers as Perez de Leon, Vincente Espinel, Rojas, Guevara, Santos, and Quevedo. The last-mentioned, Quevedo, a man universally appreciated must, however, be distinguished from the others.

With his extraordinary learning, brilliant imagination, and wonderful versatility he was one of the celebrities of Castile. He was ambassador and diplomatist, the friend and favourite of the Duke of Ossuna, and took part in all the important affairs of his time, now the recipient of great distinction and now suffering great humiliation. He commenced a life of vicissitudes with literary success. In the pauses of so eventful a life he found leisure to write historical studies, novels, moral treatises and humorous poetry, of which the greater part has been lost. By reason of his satire and his fine

defence of common sense and reason against the flood of bad taste, by his lively humour, his delicate, keen, and biting irony, we may perhaps class him a successor to the great humorists Aristophanes, Lucianus, Rabelais, Swift, and Daniel Defoe.

§ 5.

We must not overlook Holland in this bird's-eye view of European literature. She boasts of a glorious past. The seventeenth century was, as in England and France, the epoch of wonderful intellectual attainment in the Netherlands. The Dutch Republic reached its height of moral and political greatness.

This small people, mainly fishermen and merchants, was triumphant in the struggle with Nature and mankind at the cost of endless effort. They finally conquered their own territory, checked the encroachments of the sea, built dykes, drained lakes, then having overcome the elements, they expelled the invaders, re-asserted their religious and national independence and carried the fame of their navy to the ends of the earth. The flag of Orange floated in Sumatra, Java, Hindostan, Ceylon, New Zealand, Brazil, and from Guiana to the Cape of Good Hope. Van Tromp, Piet-heim, and Opdam made the Dutch colours respected at sea, and on the Continent Holland dared to face the united armies of Louis XIV. and Charles I. In European affairs the name of her grand pensionary, Jan de Witt, was classed among those sovereigns of Europe who were proudest of their crowns. Holland was not only a great power but was honoured as the adopted home of learned men and because she maintained liberties elsewhere proscribed. When the persecuted English Catholics were seeking in France freedom to act and think as patriots, the Protestants, banished from France by the intolerance of Louis XIV. and his advisers, were swarming to the hospitable Netherlands, which Bayle has named "the great ark of refugees." The printing-presses of

Amsterdam and Rotterdam filled the market with numerous writings, whose publication would not have been possible in lands where religious or political tyranny prevailed.

In the preceding century the preaching of the Reformation had started a flood of controversy, for which Latin furnished the best medium. Simultaneously classical education, developed on a sound basis by the Jesuits, produced that learned succession of theologians, philologists, translators and scholars, of whom the Low Countries are so justly proud.[1] Skilful Latin versifiers charm the lovers of the ancient classics with their imitations of Horace and Virgil. Others, following the example of the Frenchman, Jacques de Thou, write important historical works in the old words of Livy. Grotius, Bolland, and Jansen earn a great reputation with their legal and theological writings. Spinoza, in poverty and retirement, elaborates his famous system of ideal pantheism,[2] while wits wish to arrive at celebrity by copying models in the wonderful language of Rome.

Holland, not satisfied with being, as has just been pointed out, the refuge of European freedom, was enabled, owing to her social conditions, to become protector of the Latin spirit. She discovered in Grotius, that man of universal learning and founder of modern international obligation, the lofty tone of Lucan and the intellect of Seneca ; in Daniel Heinsius—the noble verse of Virgil and in Nicholas Heinsius, his son—the charm of Ovid's style ; or again in Braekhius—a happy imitation of Propertius. In the same sphere Flanders aspired to the honour of being Holland's rival. The *Idylls*

[1] Erasmus, Everardi, Dousa, and Justus Lipsius.

[2] Spinoza's doctrines were not fully known till after his death, owing to the publication of his works for the most part posthumously. His principal work, *Ethics*, expounds the whole system of this great geometrical theorist, the precursor of modern materialists. Spinoza has never found many followers in France. Quite otherwise in Germany where physiologists have borrowed from him their theory of universal life, historians their theory of history, and philosophers their anticipations as to the so-called genuine philosophy of the future.

of William Becan were there regarded as models of that ingenious artlessness which characterises the pastoral poem.

However, in this the mother-tongue was not sacrificed. Patriotic minds, imbued with true ancestral spirit, cared for its preservation and guarded it from degeneration.[1] Vondel, Cats, and Hooft are the principal Dutch poets.[2]

Vondel was one of the most gifted, and is still regarded as their chief poet. Earlier than Milton, he produced a masterpiece of tragedy, *Lucifer*, based on the same great theme as *Paradise Lost*, namely, the fall of Satan and the war between Heaven and Hell. Corneille Hooft is admired more as a historian than as a poet, for his vigour, his somewhat drawn-out solemnity, his conciseness and reliability which characterise him as the Tacitus of Holland. But Jacob Cats was, without doubt, the most popular writer. His books, penned with an artless simplicity, still retain their position as the second Bible in Holland, the universal handbook for an honest and quiet life. Every year still the national drama, *Gÿsbrecht van Amstel*, with which Vondel opened the theatre in Amsterdam, in 1637, is played in honour of the memory of the dramatist.

§ 6.

If we turn our eyes to Germany we fail to discover any such flourishing state of things there. Deplorable consequences ensued from a variety of causes—the civil strife which from the second half of the preceding century had begun to weaken the country ; the unspeakable misery of

[1] Prior to this Cornhert, Van Brederode, Marnix of Ste-Aldegonde, Peter Dathenus, Lawrence Spieghel, Roemer Visscher and his two daughters, Anne and Marie, had combined their labours to bring about a reaction against the exclusive tendencies of the scholars and humanists of the sixteenth century, and to create a standard of Dutch poetry.

[2] Round these leaders rallied Jacob Westerbaan, Constantine Huyghens, father of the famous mathematician, Philip Zwerts, John Antonides, Lucas Rotgans, Samuel Coster, Gerard Brandt, the important historian Francis Clarsen, and Dapper, physician and traveller.

the Thirty Years' War ; the perpetual splitting up of the States composing the Empire and the constant change of rulers which resulted from it before giving place to a great but painful social evolution. The Imperial authority was nominal and powerless, there was neither national life nor patriotism. The kingdoms were divided in such a manner as to produce a number of rival fiefs. Nothing remained of the institutions and strength of ancient Germany but the "organised anarchy" of which Hegel speaks, in which ideas, sentiments, and inspiration were alike stifled. There was universal disorder working havoc in the language and literature as in things social and political.

At no period can any European country be said to have suffered from such a succession of evils. These calamities exceeded those which Germany had endured during the period of the great invasions or what she had undergone from terrible outbreaks of the plague.

There were large territories but recently well-cultivated ; cities were flourishing in which industry and commerce were in full swing ; countless villages were developing with all the old patriotism. Serfdom was no longer spreading on all hands, but tended to disappear. "When the storm passed there was the desolation of chaos ; parasites destroyed what had been sown by man, and he fought with the beasts for the wood, the field, and his shelter." [1] At the end of the Thirty Years' War, Germany had lost three-quarters of her population and four-fifths of her wealth. It needed more than two centuries for her to repair the disaster.

The Reformation, still so imperfect and so limited in its sphere of action, had energised the combative faculties of the mind. At the beginning of the seventeenth century printing-presses flooded the world with a mass of literary products, all called by a family name, *avisos*, messengers, pamphlets, lampoons, and unfortunately also too many sermons, theses, and controversial books arguing and quib-

[1] Gustave Freytag, *Pictures of German History—The Thirty Years' War.*

bling about trifles. In all of these artistic merit was small, but a genuine activity was the result, and a very marked tendency to spread ideas and intelligence could be seen in secular matters. Every one became aware of his own interests as well as those of the general public. Pamphlets circulated rapidly, producing a stir hitherto unknown or suspected. Consciences were aroused and quickened on behalf of a person or a cause, and in this way modern journalism was foreshadowed. Amidst such great distress and the wreck of public credit this unselfish interest vanished. War had hardened men's hearts against sympathy for others, and they regarded their own misery with torpid indifference. A kind of hostility seemed to affect men's minds upon subjects worthy of their study. The really vital questions were completely neglected at a time when religious rivalries were raging, when useless disputes of theologians were increasing, or when the hallucinations of Pietism alone were forthcoming to console and sustain Germany in her hour of need. This Pietism was first evoked by the evangelical preaching of Jacob Spener, but it degenerated into the worst extravagance of a hard and fanatical Puritanism.

During this sombre phase of its history German talent was repressed. The eclipse was nearly total. We enter upon the seventeenth century, "the miserable seventeenth century" of which Vilmar complains—the Franco-German century, the period of slavish subjection to foreign models. The result was a strange medley of imitations, a bad mixture of the old classic tastes with the *esprit gaulois*, the union of the Anglo-Saxon and the Teutonic.

So many foreign soldiers traversing German soil not only brought with them their habits but their language, so that German was suddenly permeated with an influx of Latin, Italian, Spanish, and especially French words. "Should these peoples wish to take back the words borrowed from them," asked the poet Neumark, "how much German would remain? What a bare and ugly bird this would be deprived

of all its feathers!" Indeed, in spite of this invasion of cosmopolitan elements the language had been impoverished rather than enriched. The satirical writings, religious and polemical works and Grimmelshausen's famous novel—*Simplicissimus*, a very ingenious imitation of the "picaresque" tales of Mendoza and Quevedo—alone evinced any vitality. Men of great talent, such as Leibniz, the most encyclopedic mind since Aristotle, and Puffendorf, successor to Grotius, dealt with great philosophical and social questions but did not write in German;[1] they chose Latin and French as their medium so as to render their ideas and works intelligible to all the scholars of Europe.

In the innumerable small princely and electoral courts established or recognised by the Treaty of Westphalia, dancing, Italian songs, poetry of a light kind, tales, tragedies, and drawing-room comedies were cultivated. To copy French manners, habits, and language became a mania; but the manners of the lower classes retained their lack of polish; slow development of the upper classes left Germany far behind other nations, excepting the Russians.

§ 7.

Moreover, the majority of the nations of Europe followed the same intellectual bent in imitating France, except of course politically. This was instigated by the admiration inspired by the majesty of Louis XIV., the splendour of his Court, and the masterpieces produced in his reign. The Treaty of Nimeguen showed the military grandeur of this monarchy at its highest—it was the zenith, for no greater could be reached. The age had produced with unparalleled profusion that which was necessary for its early maturity. Slowly and majestically the splendour declined. When the

[1] It is noteworthy, however, that the works of Leibniz in German, which remained for years in obscurity, were published in Berlin in 1838 and 1840 by Guhrauer.

empire of Charles V. was sinking to decay, the reign of Louis XIV., with its victories and defeats, its fickle fortune and immortal works was likewise rapidly becoming past history.

The dying seventeenth century bequeathed its successor an occult and mysterious power, an ideal to be realised and a mission to be fulfilled. The wish to create a better social system, which should free itself from oppression and prejudice by the force of reason, hovered vaguely before men's minds. The relaxing of the rules of the ancient hierarchy, the mingling of the various social conditions under one sole authority, the omnipotence of the king, had long since prepared people in an indirect fashion to grasp the loftiest sentiment of the equality of hearts and consciences apart from mere chance distinctions. Nevertheless this need, or, perhaps, this vague desire for moral regeneration, these inklings of a more equitable justification of the laws of nature and the *rôle* of man, which were to be the glory and veritable expression of the Encyclopedists, were very slow in manifesting themselves.

CHAPTER XVI

The actual commencement of the philosophic age somewhat vague—Characteristic independence of literature may now be seen—The French Encyclopedists—Voltaire, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Diderot—Interchange of ideas among the different nations and especially between England and France—Literary supremacy of the latter till about 1789.

§ 1.

THE eighteenth century, like a weak and sickly child, commenced somewhat feebly with its early years seriously hampered. Grievous difficulties saw its advent. The grandeur of the past loomed large and overshadowed the present. The death of Louis XIV., which had removed the phantom of a dying monarchy, was followed by the excesses of the Regency. Literature reflected contemporary manners; taste underwent remarkable changes; the language lost the polish and distinction of former times.

The great writers of the preceding period had left no immediate successors. Voltaire, Montesquieu, Jean Jacques, Rousseau, Diderot, and Buffon had as yet to make their reputations. Literature had preserved but a colourless correctness in place of the recent splendour, and its highest achievements were but legacies from the past.

Jean Baptiste Rousseau belongs equally to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Boileau indicated him as his successor in the French Academy. D'Aguesseau, Rollin, Lesage, Fleury, Vertot, and Saint Simon—the last striking character, and the only one who in the decline of literature

combined the bold and vigorous accents of Corneille with the passion of D'Aubigné—are like the survivors of another age,[1] and seem isolated amidst the rising generation.

A new school aspires to authority. Fontenelle, supple, ingenious, and versatile, always fails to be natural; Terrasson and La Motte, vaguely poetical, endeavour to replace the taste for the great and simple by a love for the eccentric, far-fetched, and unexpected. But this school had only a small and restricted sphere of influence.

It was philosophy that was most successful in the general awakening of intelligence. The visions of the dawning epoch remained unrealised. The age was one of powerful and conflicting passions; the existing order of things was not in accordance with its lofty aspirations; the immediate needs of the present and the problems of the future struggled for supremacy. It at length became conscious of its destiny. Philosophy was nursing its strength before extending its influence. Men of the seventeenth century within the confines of religious houses or Royal palaces, while bowing submissively before the twofold authority of the Church and classical antiquity, had been fully conscious of the inalienable claims of reason and of the individual conscience. "I think, therefore I am," said Descartes. "All man's dignity lies in thought," remarked Pascal. Noble minds and keen thinkers applied these aphorisms to psychology. The eighteenth century, now ironical, now enthusiastic, extended to society what the seventeenth had discovered for the individual. It proclaimed that reason, justice, and truth should not merely speak in the heart of man but should be manifest in man's relations to his fellows. It set up a practical end, the rearranging of the fabric of society. Moral truth had been investigated and examined

[1] It is noteworthy that Saint Simon's influence was not felt by his contemporaries, nor was it possible it should be, for his *Memoirs* were only published long after his death (1755), *i.e.*, not till 1824. Three-quarters of his life were passed in the eighteenth century, but his ideas and language would rather lead us to identify him with the seventeenth century.

to the utmost at the time of Bourdaloue and La Bruyère now the analysis of social truths became the object of the ambitious thinker. There were some who went even further, and connected moral and social questions often at the risk of paradox and sophism.

Ardent theorists began to plead in a touching and declamatory style for the enfranchisement of the mind. They reverted to the source of all progress, namely the threefold faith in the perfectibility of man, his inalienable rights, and his unquenchable sense of justice. Whilst enhancing the dignity of the individual they strove to free mankind from a narrow and exclusive ideal, restricted to the frontier of a single country or the confines of one nation. They endeavoured to familiarise the world with broad conceptions of a human, as distinguished from a national, ideal. The notion of humanity dominates all French literature, and consequently all European literature of the eighteenth century.

This literature began to assume, even in the person of its authors, an independent character hitherto unknown. Both author and thinker alike, supported by the growth of a power born but yesterday—public opinion—acquired an extraordinary moral authority. They flooded the world with bold philosophical and social ideas ; they possessed great influence in the councils of the aristocracy and upon them were the hopes of the people fixed.

But there is one man, Voltaire, with his universal knowledge, incarnates the innumerable aggressive and sceptical tendencies of the age. He reasons and discusses, correctly or otherwise, with passion or violence, derision or truth, all topics capable of exciting intellectual curiosity. He leads an army of reformers. One by one all forms of thought are dealt with, and the spirit of inquiry becoming necessarily also the spirit of negation and destruction, permeates physics, metaphysics, ethics, logic, and history.

In contradistinction to the scholars of the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries who had paved the way for Voltaire, and who having, in defiance of the Church, solved the great problems declared by her to be outside man's province, and so exerted only an indirect influence on theology, the new philosophers boldly attacked even these principles regarded as the intellectual basis of faith.

§ 2.

As a matter of fact comparatively few were occupied with these serious questions. Although it was an age of intellectual progress the moral standard was low, and men generally were worldly and dissipated. Novels, comedies, light stories or pretty trifles in prose or verse were constantly provided for the entertainment of the leisured. Feminine influence prevailed in the *salons* [1] and in society, and meted out favours and success. As a result the imagination could scarcely escape paying its tribute to the feminine ascendancy. Certain authors were much too eager to ornament mere sentimentality with wit. Marivaux was unrivalled in his exaggerated analysis of amorous diplomacy.

The study of woman and her peculiarities was his favourite topic, and it afforded him the opportunity of demonstrating, by too refined ingenuity and too subtle argument, most minute gradations of love and coquetry. This won him the admiration of the fair sex. The tender Abbé Prévost discovered the secret of pleasing his contemporaries without considerable innovations of style, but sufficiently distinctive to constitute a new class of agreeable and touching tales. We know that the younger Crebillon, the earliest of the "immoral novelists," was for a long time the delight of the youth of both sexes on account of his *Égarements*. Amusing

[1] The literary coteries over which Mme. de Lambert, Mme. du Deffand, Mme. Geffrin, Mme. d'Oudetot, and Mlle. de Lespinasse presided, were the veritable nurseries for the Academy. Mme. de Prie had sufficient power to select a queen for France, and Mme. de Tencin to nominate cardinals and ambassadors.

sentimentality was much in favour. Tears were easily provoked by the imaginative literature of this light and voluptuous period. Yet the transition was quite natural from the sentimental effusion to the reasoned problem, from worldly pleasure to the notion of utility, from the study of the individual to the study of society. The novel itself became philosophical, history still more so ; finally philosophy pervaded everything.

Voltaire and the Encyclopedists undertook their task of liberating men's consciences, deadened by self-indulgence ; there was then no free expression of thought. Numberless works were repressed by the censor, or if imported from abroad they were stopped and repressed by the censor on the frontier. The privacy of letters was constantly violated for State purposes. The regulations for the theatre were relegated to the care of a gentleman in waiting. These facts are quite sufficient to show the general severity of restraint. Things were in this condition when the conflict of ideas against long-standing abuses began. The influence of such men as Voltaire, Diderot, and Jean Jacques Rousseau extended rapidly.

No man ever dominated his age to a greater extent than Voltaire. This was due to his qualities as well as to the defects of those qualities ; to his flexibility, his raciness, his indefatigable curiosity, his universal knowledge, his enthusiasm, his contradictions, his sound common sense which acted upon those around him as if supported by supreme authority ; finally to the charm of some of his mistakes.

No one could better adapt himself to the stirring passions of this same period than Diderot. He, a scholar and critic, tale-writer, novelist, dramatist, and "pantophile," is eminently the great disseminator of ideas. As director-in-chief of the great *Encyclopedia*, Diderot was the founder of a school, the avowed leader of literature, the mainspring of a great intellectual activity.

Voltaire and Diderot appeal to men's minds. Jean Jacques

Rousseau awakens their souls, and the result is at once deeper and more extensive; it survives to-day because he re-inspired the love of Nature.[1] Rousseau affords the most striking example of the power of oral influence, good or otherwise, of a single individual.[2] He surprised and charmed all the second half of the eighteenth century. He delights our own time as much by his faults as by his good qualities. He introduced changes into French literature, and notions of justice and equality into customs and laws. It would have been better had he always avoided systematic paradox, and if we had not so often to admire, pity, and differ from him on a single page.

The liberalism of these three great minds with that of Montesquieu, which was evolved originally in England by the writings of Bacon, Newton, and Locke, partly adopted by them and popularised in France by their writings, was then disseminated all over Europe. These ideas, sometimes apparently divergent, but governed by a common inspiration, were heard everywhere. They spread with a rapidity which overcame all obstacles and carried with them an almost unlimited power of expansion. Owing to the influence of Voltaire and Montesquieu the principle of open inquiry, freedom of discussion, and general criticism penetrated political life, customs, and laws, and has become a necessary

[1] We must note here and emphasise the ascendancy of Buffon, whose lasting glory it is to have revealed to his contemporaries the grandeur and immensity of Nature. Distinct traces of his influence as well as that of Jean Jacques Rousseau are noticeable in the style of Chateaubriand and Lamartine.

[2] The influence of Jean Jacques Rousseau is seen in a great number of writers and thinkers, both French and otherwise, among whom we note Senancour, Chateaubriand, Mme. de Stäel, Jean Paul Richter, Karamzine, Wieland, Alfieri (author of *Tyranny*), Benjamin Constant, Lamennais, George Sand, Michelet, George Eliot, who one day cried out in a burst of gratitude, "It was Rousseau who quickened my soul," and lastly, in Tolstoi. However superior the great Russian writer may be in character, we recognise in Tolstoi remarkable affinities with Rousseau. "The age of Rousseau and of the Encyclopedists," says Tolstoi, who was perpetually inspired by the eighteenth century, "is the golden age of French literature."

feature of the needs and practices of modern times. And the spiritual quality of mind which simultaneously touched the hearts and imaginations added an additional charm to the force of theory. Philosophers of the school of Rousseau, German "*illuminati*," English and American "philadelphians," as well as the philosophers of the "pure ideality" school, regard "intellectualism" in the metaphysical sense of justice as supreme.

French thought became the thought of the century. France, at no period of her history since the Middle Ages, exercised such authority as that which she exerted between the years 1750 and 1789.

§ 3.

In Germany the predominance of the French language was too general to be merely ephemeral. From the year 1750 onwards a Frenchman visiting Berlin or Potsdam might have thought himself at Paris or Versailles. Frederick the Great, though fascinated by the power of his native land, conceived a distaste for German literature. "We have seen poetry despised by the greatest son of the Fatherland, namely Frederick," laments Schiller, "and withdraw from the powerful throne which no longer afforded it protection." He only took an interest in books from Paris. When reorganising the Royal Society of Berlin, with Maupertuis as president, he insisted that the memoirs, instead of being in Latin, in accordance with the rule established previously by Leibniz, should be in the language of Descartes, and he founded a thoroughly French Academy in his capital.

All Germany was stirred by reading the *Nouvelle Héloise* and *Emile*. Thanks to Rousseau the sentimentality which prevails in these books had dictated the tone to the whole of polite society, and won the hearts of all German women. German romanticism was deeply imbued with it.

In Russia Catherine II., who had not forgotten her German

origin, could not escape this trend of opinion. She took upon herself to introduce into Russia that culture to which in her early youth she had been accustomed. She hovered between two opposing streams of a literature little removed from its infancy which contested for the privilege of constituting a standard of culture. These currents comprised a Western element eager for the adoption of foreign influence and an Eastern or Slav element vaguely desirous of self-evolution. Catherine favoured both alternately, but with a leaning towards her panegyrists in France and Germany. This was at any rate the case so long as she did not fear the encroachment of liberal ideas in the light of a menace, for it is a matter of common knowledge that the latter part of her reign did not resemble the earlier. Though in no way, moreover, sacrificing her autocracy in the carrying out of her imperial wishes, she carried on a most active correspondence with the encyclopedists, extolled their noble independence, and honoured with her praises the intellectual sovereignty of Voltaire. She further showered her favours on Diderot, recommended the poets of St. Petersburg to imitate French models, and she practised what she preached, when resting from the cares of government, by indulging in intellectual recreations and dashing off comedies and treatises on education. The maids of honour copied their sovereign, cultivated learning, and boasted of their active encouragement of intellectual pursuits. One of them, the Princess Daschkoff, the friend of Catherine, was proud of holding a *salon* in the French fashion, and presided over the meetings of the Academy.[1]

At St. Petersburg this extensive imitation and the lack of genius produced only feeble results ; the soil was poor, and

[1] The first Russian dictionary (1789-1794, in 6 vols.) was compiled under the direction of the Princess Daschkoff, and it is well known that she took a leading part in its production. (Cf. her *Memoirs* in English by Mrs. Bradford from the MSS. left by her and translated into French by Alfred des Essarts. Paris, 1859, 4 vols.)

there was an entire absence of originality, strength, and vitality.[1] Rhetoric prevailed over lyrical gifts in the works of Dierjavine, the Court poet of the "Semiramis of the north." When aspiring to become the Racine of Russia Soumarokoff hardly surpassed the attainments of Campistron. He indulged to excess in trifling verses, mythological paraphernalia, and imitations of foreign madrigals. It was a time of first attempts. The fact that certain writers endeavoured to take their own measures in their own province with foreign leading lights was not to be despised. The distant echo of the thought of other lands was likewise a voice not to be stifled, for its stronger and more personal note, namely its raciness, resounded in the satires of Soumarokoff.

§ 4.

England did not submit completely to French supremacy, especially as the lyrical age of Pope and Prior followed the period that included Sir William Temple, Samuel Johnson, Daniel Defoe, Goldsmith, Swift and Fielding, Smollett and Sterne. These were all prose-writers of the first rank. Some of them blended with no mean skill knowledge and judgment, others displayed with success and a fine imagination in the portrayal of actual life, and created imperishable types of character. England followed French models and recognised it as a sign of culture to speak French. There

[1] It is also noteworthy that henceforth some originality may be traced. In comedy Von Vizine evinced a biting and frank humour in satirising the vain and ridiculous vanities of the lower nobility. Petrov, a lyrical poet, gave evidence of fire and temerity in lauding the triumphs of the favourite, Gregor Orloff. The fabulist Krilof gave the impress of his race to the Fables of Lafontaine. Karamzine, poet, critic, and romance writer, before making a name by important contributions to history was a leading authority in literary matters. He was a passionate disciple of Jean Jacques Rousseau and was imbued with emotion and sensibility, so characteristic of the French School, which wins the approval of both mind and heart. He also forms a link between the classic and romantic school.

were translations and imitations of certain French poets. Most of the English sceptics found their materials in "the incomparable dictionary of Pierre Bayle," the precursor of Voltaire. Nevertheless an abyss separated the writers of both nations; England was only superficially influenced by classical tradition. Mere adaptations did not in any way check the growth of her own individuality, and she may, moreover, flatter herself, and not without justification, with having furnished the most valuable assistance in the development of French philosophy. Voltaire studied the works of Locke, Pope, Newton, the deistical writings of Bolingbroke, Collins, Woolston, Toland, Chesterfield, Tindal, and Chable. Diderot translated Shaftesbury and was an enthusiastic admirer of Richardson. He did not hesitate to proclaim in turn as his guide and master the author of *Sir Charles Grandison* or the dramatist Lillo, Sterne or Moore, Fielding or Addison. We might almost say that British taste made itself obtrusively felt in the secondary branches of art and fashion. And going a step further, we may assert that if we reviewed French literature from the time of Voltaire to the present day, taking special note of the intellectual exchanges from one side of the Channel to the other, the English influence would be found everywhere.[1] Nevertheless the study of British writers on the part of literary Paris in the eighteenth century was rather a species of emancipation than of assimilation. One would see it arose from a feeling which grew stronger from day to day, namely, the desire to naturalise English institutions and English liberty in France. Ideas emanating from Oxford or London were soon destined

[1] In the eighteenth century the *Lettres anglaises*, *Zaire*, *L'Esprit des lois*; *Byron*, and in the nineteenth, *Mazeppa*, Victor Hugo's plays, the *Ode to* the *Dernier chant de Childe Harild*, the *Contes d'Espagne*, *Namouna*, the *Iambes* of Barbier how much France in works eminently French is permeated with English influence. See James Darmesteter, *Etudes sur la littérature anglaise*; Leslie Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (Lond., 2nd ed., 1881), Joseph Texte, *Etudes de littérature européenne*, 1898.

to re-cross the Channel elaborated, enlarged, and transformed. Montesquieu breathed a new life into these ideas which reached him in some sense in the form of metaphysical formulæ, and at every turn calls to mind the moral nature of man amidst the abstractions of the intellect. Voltaire stirred to life the cold incredulity of the British school of thought. Thus the two currents meet, act, and re-act on one another in continuous exchange. At no period has England looked to France and imitated her more, nor France England. What a strange destiny for these two great peoples, who have never ceased to detest but at the same time to study each other! They are at enmity yet closely related, and were placed opposite to attract and repel one another by turns, to influence each other unceasingly by means of exchange or reaction.[1]

[1] As a matter of fact both gravitated continuously round the great subjects of intellectual inquiry. "Their conditions of progress," declares Buckle in his admirable *History of English Civilisation*, "is so identical that the relation between Montaigne and Descartes is exactly the same as that between Hooker and Chillingworth, taking into account their difference of opinion."

Each of the writers just mentioned should have our lengthy study and attention. But at least we can rapidly trace some of the features of the different personalities. We recognise in Sir William Temple a brilliant mind, a clever diplomat, a statesman, a philosopher steeped in the lax doctrines of Epicureanism, and, above all, a brilliant, clever, and learned man of letters. Dr. Johnson, critic, moralist, romance writer, and poet, presents a less amiable figure. Nevertheless he exercised a sort of literary dictatorship in his day, and despite his habits of uncouthness and irregularity, his disobliging manner, his ill-temper (veiling, it is true, a generous and delicate nature), he was much courted by the best society of his day. His affected and artificial style, overflowing with latinisms, evinced no easy grace, except when he imparted the familiar tone of his conversations, as he did of design in his *Lives of the Poets*.

Defoe was the author of more than two hundred works, of which a single one, popular throughout the world, has obliterated the rest. May we not safely say that *Robinson Crusoe* will always stir the hearts of the young? Defoe may be regarded as the father of journalism, the genuine founder of English fiction, and master not only of the essayists Steele and Addison, but also of the novelists Richardson and Fielding.

Oliver Goldsmith was a critic of a refined and delicate taste, the author

Although English literature produced a long series of inspired poets, dramatists, historians, philosophers, and incomparable essayists and such as were the object of European admiration, she could not escape, any more than other nations, the influx of French ideas. "Paris is the centre of Europe," wrote the great Edmund Burke, "the English Cicero."

of comedies full of naturalness and genuine gaiety. He was a kindly but severe moralist, and one of the most original writers of his country. His irregular life was not always in correspondence with his idealist literary work.

English talent has no more attractive and at the same time repulsive representative than Jonathan Swift. We are dominated by him without loving him. His verses are in singular taste and almost inimitable. His prose personifies with indefinable power the strong qualities of the Saxon race. "A keenly sensitive nature, pride, and a realistic mind," says Taine, "produced in him a unique style of great force and shocking brutality, imbued with hatred, scorn, and truth!" He is humorous in the highest degree, and this style in which a sorrowful grotesqueness is noticeable, is of classic perfection.

Byron called Fielding "The prose Homer of human nature." His novel, *Tom Jones*, gained him world-wide reputation. It is the first English work of imagination based on a faithful imitation of life.

Smollett had, among many gifts, a pleasing suppleness of talent which enabled him to adapt his style to nearly every form of literature. As a historian he was more animated than impartial, more attractive than reliable, as a dramatist more inventive than practical, as a poet more impassioned than sensitive, as a critic more vigorous than just. (Cf. Taine's fine essay in his *History of English Literature* and also the article on Walter Scott.) In romance he found the best outlet for his diverse faculties: appositeness and vivacity of mind, a keen sense of the ridiculous, an abundance of gaiety as inexhaustible as the resources of his imagination, and no lack of discernment and shrewdness.

All has been said already concerning the merits of the author of *Tristam Shandy* and the *Sentimental Journey*, the shrewdness of his observations, his knowledge of the human heart, the resources of his imagination, the variety of his mind, clever rather than eminent, now artificial, now genuine, now delicate, now coarse, now imitative, now original, now sensual, now refined, given to triviality, and suddenly, by astonishing transitions, reminding the reader of his kinship with Shakespeare. Laurence Sterne, despite the faults of his private life and the immorality of his books, has remained in the front rank of English writers.

§ 5.

All countries, whether voluntarily or by a kind of compulsion, yield to French influence. The Spaniards, Portuguese, and Venetians profess to despise other nations and to hate the French. Yet they are not the least eager to catch even the softest echoes from Paris, which Grimm nicknamed "the *café* of Europe." It is affirmed that the Swiss, whose great literary period was the eighteenth century, made a stout resistance to the power of French philosophy, a resistance both intellectual and religious. The Bernese Oberland boasts its scholar and thinker, Albert Haller; Zurich counts among its children the educational light, Pestalozzi; Scaffhausen reaps the benefit of the learning and high merits of Johann von Müller, the earliest of modern historians; German Switzerland claimed as her own Bodmer, Sulzer, Lavater; but to Geneva rests the honour of having given to France Jean Jacques Rousseau, and furnished the literature of a neighbouring people with the most marvellous medium of European development. Spain is at a low ebb from a literary standpoint and sees no other remedy available than to follow the example of Melendez Valdes and Fernandez de Moratin and yield to French influence.

Italy, ruled by Princes half French by birth, makes no effort to resist the invasion of French taste. Gifted men are, however, not lacking—indeed, they abound, and in a variety of directions. We may cite Parini, who exposes the foibles of society to general ridicule; Meli, who recalls Theocritus by the charm of his pastorals; Varano, the follower of Dante or Forteguerra, who imitate Ariosto. Melodrama and opera are not the only theatrical productions to gain public favour. Metastasio, who by the harmony of his verse earned the title of Racine of Italy, combines music and drama with a view to charm the senses. Carlo Gozzi, an original and productive author, revived languishing comedy by resourceful invention,

and his rival, Goldoni, improves on the originator of the fairy tale in vigour and amount of production.

Italy, we have noticed, is not insusceptible to French influence. This is perhaps because such influence is noticeable chiefly among political writers like Beccaria and Filanger, who are thoroughly imbued with the prevailing form of philosophy. Again it may be ascribed to the fact that those who succumb to it most are the poets inclined to cultivate didactic style, such as Betti, Zampieri, or Spolverini, or the exhausted forms of the Anacreontic ode, the eclogue or idyll, such as Zappi, Cotta, Baretti, Fantoni, and especially Frugoni. Condillac became tutor of the Prince of Parma, and with or without him all philosophy permeated Italy. "I owe everything to French books," says Beccaria. "D'Alembert, Diderot, Helvetius, and Buffon, illustrious names which one cannot utter without emotion, your immortal works are my constant reading ; they are my occupation by day and my meditation by night."

The rebels of Corsica demanded a code of the author of the *Contrat social*. Poland begged Rousseau for a constitution prior to a similar honour falling to the lot of Mably, the philosophical historian and Utopian thinker on the part of the American Congress, 1783.

In Holland, where Flemish only survives as a dialect and Dutch only as an exercise in the art of translation, French imitation has carried all before it. Native poetry seems to have found the elements best destined to stir the imagination in the characteristics of the soil, the race, and the mother-country in the remarkable physical characteristics and the annals of history. Local inspiration found many a subject in contemplating that floating stretch of mud and sand that goes by the name of Holland, and the soil of which, by dint of immense works, dykes, and draining, has become one of the most fertile countries in the world ; or again, in the sight of the coast[1] and of those vast marshes, and

[1] See the interesting descriptions of the Italian traveller, Edmondo de Amicis.

numberless canals intersecting in all directions; lastly tradition, the memory of heroic wars and fabulous naval expeditions. And in the case of many writers these themes sufficed. Without aspiring to lofty themes elegiac and bucolic poets took pleasure in describing in an easy and tempered style the gay or melancholy effects of the rivers, lakes, streams, and shores of their fatherland. They have earned the title of "Shore poets" of Holland,[1] and one day will be deemed worthy of comparison with the English Lake Poets. It is of no consequence that they have no common point of interest. The style and wealth of imagination of the farmer, Hubert Poot, and the energy of the patriot, Bellamy, are held in but small esteem, as also the humoristic qualities of Langendijk, and the depth of feeling of Nomz, two unfortunate poets who came to the workhouse. There are a great number of authors, nearly all of whom are influenced by or model their plays on the favourite dramatic works of the reigns of Louis XIV. and XV.[2]

Denmark, under Christian VII. and Frederick VI., follows the general trend and shows the progress recently brought about in her language and literature, thanks to the energising influence of Ludwig Holberg, the Norwegian, known as the Voltaire of the North.

Sweden appeals equally to foreign inspiration to enlarge her circle of influence. She produced at this time such remarkable writers as Olaüs Dallin, philosophers, like Swedenborg, scholars like Linnæus,[3] and poets and dramatic authors like Gyllenborg, Oxenstiern, Kellgrenn, Lidner, and Hallmann. She naturally turned towards the source of light in Europe. The imitation of French manners and ways of thinking

[1] Bruyn, Van der Kodde, Smits, Backer.

[2] Towards the end of the seventeenth century appears a counter-current. Public taste grows weary of French imitation, and turning to English and German authors, more closely approaches the original and individual character of Holland. (See H. C. Müller's *Histoire de la littérature néerlandaise*. Utrecht, 1902.)

[3] The works of Swedenborg and Linnæus are in Latin.

makes rapid strides, reaching its zenith during the period between the death of Charles VII. and the rise of the Romantic School. The latter, by encouraging the Germanic influence against the French, as being more in conformance with the ideas of northern peoples, prepared the way for the final enfranchisement of Scandinavian thought.

An influence of such universality could not rest on the merits of a few important writers. It was rather the result of a complete concord of minds. Paris had crystallised the unexpressed ideas of all Europe.

CHAPTER XVII

The intellectual movement brings about social revolution in France—Ten years of trouble—The same period in England and Germany—Germany becomes prominent in intellectual matters—Wonderful development of thought in Germany—Poets and philosophers—This great intellectual activity succeeded by a period of lassitude and discouragement—The melancholy of *Werther;* the *Weltschmerz* or *mal de siècle.*

§ 1.

It has already been pointed out that the leading spirits of the eighteenth century strove in many respects to take up an attitude in opposition to the philosophers of the seventeenth century. The latter had maintained and advocated the principles of absolute monarchy, defended religious unity, and imposed a certain discipline even in the realm of letters and arts, where liberty would seem the synonym of originality. The new generation, as soon as it could make its influence felt, instituted reforms.

Ideas were substituted for faith. There were experiments in all sorts of intellectual extravagance. Hence arose the work of the Encyclopedists in France, and the movement known as "Aufklärung" in Germany, of which Wieland, the Voltaire of Germany, was one of the most noteworthy representatives. He set up philosophy in place of faith [1] until Herder entered the arena.

[1] Wieland, at first a pietist and theosophist, persuaded in the early period of his career that mysticism was the surest road to happiness, subsequently passed to a vague platonism, next became an Epicurean and a rationalist, and finally an utter sceptic. He never, at any rate as far as his prose is concerned, lost that character of biting irony which had succeeded his former warmth and enthusiasm.

In more than one direction people had followed the trend of thought in England, introduced by the ideas of Locke and Shaftesbury [1] and the freethinkers of the reigns of William III. and Queen Anne. In France the ideas were carried to excess by the carping and aggressive temperament of writers. At the same time they became dangerous on their social side by reason of the destructive elements. All the great social aspirations in turn, the love of justice, the desire for a more equitable division of property, the purely speculative theories of the philosophers, finally assumed the character of an absolute and dogmatic conservatism.

Mankind was conscious of the approach of an unusual crisis which might, in a single night, shatter the foundations of an edifice of many ages' duration. The rumours of great events abroad, such as the revolt of the American colonies, were destined to hasten the development. For they pointed the way and provided timely means of healing the ills of society by political methods, and of breaking chains which had become too heavy.

A great revolution is always noted in the minds of men before making itself felt in the laws or the social conditions. Beaumarchais and Figaro had appeared, both skilful in the dangerous art of stirring the passions through amusement. Women, too, whose lively imaginations are attracted by all illusions, eagerly welcomed the revolution, which would, in their opinion, give free rein to the qualities of both soul and mind. Political theories were dragged from seclusion and were discussed in the *salons*. They were attacked with spirit in these elegant arenas, where the most fashionable wits assembled in order to receive or impart that electric touch which is always a source of danger to a highly excitable nation. Whether consciously or otherwise Republicanism gained ground daily. A decided hatred of monarchical rule

[1] The Earl of Shaftesbury, the friend and warm admirer of Locke, had become estranged from him on the question of the innateness of ideas. In reality he founded his whole theory on the basis of a genial scepticism.

was manifested prior to this aversion, taking the form of violent acts or the brutality of subsequent events. At last the storm burst. When the tempest had abated, carrying with it the monarchy and ancient *régime*, nothing of the past remained.

During the ten years of revolutionary convulsions, French literature experienced a period of decline, with the exception of the revival of public eloquence due to Mirabeau, Vergniand, Barnave, Cazalès, Malonet, Maury, Sieyès, and of certain exponents of poetry of a lofty character, such as Ducis, Marie-Joseph de Chénier, and, more especially, the talented André de Chénier, the rival of the classical poets and precursor of the Romanticists. Count Joseph de Maistre, the "prophet of the past," as Ballanche calls him, laid the foundations of his reputation in his vehement *Considérations sur la France ;* Lacretelle and Roedever raised their voices in favour of a general moral reformation ; Mallet-Dupan, of Geneva, by the rugged energy of his style, showed himself a follower of Tacitus,[1] but they were little read or known by the mass of the people, who had as sole mental and spiritual guide a number of newspapers[2] lacking in culture, justifying assassination and murder in the name of liberty, and works, coarse in taste, lurid dramas in which passion replaced inspiration, novels and tales and doubtful morality. When the last eloquent sounds of the Revolution died away there was a complete cessation of literary production.

[1] The great merit of the Swiss literary historian, Pierre André Sayous, lies in his having, in 1850, discovered Mallet-Dupan, a man of considerable mental power and an original writer. Nevertheless Sayous only knew a part of his work, the rest was buried in the archives at Lisbon, or, rather, at Vienna. In 1884 André Michel published the correspondence addressed by Mallet to the Court at Vienna from 1794–8. A great-grandson of Mallet's, living in England, has written a copious biography of him. (See *Mallet du Pan and the French Revolution*, by Bernard Mallet, London, 1902.)

[2] The very titles of the newspapers published during the revolutionary period would fill a large volume.

§ 2.

We must now turn to England or Germany if we wish for signs of strength or greatness in literature.

In England, at the end of the eighteenth century, political agitation was too rampant for the peaceful cultivation of letters amidst the demands of war and public events.

Literature at such times becomes almost, if not wholly, political. Little else is written except newspaper articles and pamphlets; but what wonderful pamphlets are those famous *Letters of Junius*, in which, under cover of anonymity, one of the most formidable polemical writers the world has ever seen,[1] reveals his talent!

Although many gifted writers[2] appeared, and Sheridan, a great statesman and orator, proved himself easily to be the leading comic writer of his country,[3] and although we must reserve a special place for the intellectual dilettantism of

[1] The *Letters of Junius*, published in London in the *Public Advertiser*, from 1769 to 1772, were attributed in turn to Sackville, Burke, Hamilton, Littleton, Lloyd, Richard Glover, Horne Tooke, Cook, Boyd, and others. The author's secret was well kept, and for a long time the field of conjecture remained opened. The general opinion is in favour of attributing them to Sir Philip Francis.

[2] "At that time a woman, a Miss Burney, authoress of *Evelina*, took up a position in novel-writing as if it were a fortress which she had captured in the name of her own sex, and into which she introduced the improvements, demanded by good taste from such a splendid position" (L. Etienne, *Criticism in England*).

It is interesting to note that between 1789 and 1814, among a score of romance-writers of some renown, fourteen were women, three of whom won European reputation, namely, Anne Radcliffe, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen, but especially the two former.

[3] It was the great privilege of this remarkable man that he rose to the front rank as soon as he entered any career. Byron said of him: "Whatever Sheridan wished to do, he always did better than any one else. He wrote the best comedy, *The School for Scandal*, in 1777; the best opera, *The Duenna*, in 1775; the best farce, *The Critic or the Rehearsal*, in 1779; the best epistle, *The Monologue on Garrick*; and to crown all, he pronounced the famous speech on Warren Hastings, the best ever heard or uttered in this country."

Horace Walpole,[1] so richly endowed with wit and elegance, yet imaginative literature declined. History and oratory held the first place; poetry was neglected; yet the century gained in practical activity what it lost in poetic idealism.

Following Hume, Gibbon and Robertson gave proof of considerable historical knowledge. In the department of philosophy, with its questions of practical morals so dear to the somewhat metaphysical English, we find Thomas Reid, after Hutchinson, the founder of the Scotch school, and Adam Smith, the true founder of the Science of Economics, Ferguson, Price, Wollaston, and Jeremy Bentham,[2] whose first book, proclaiming that utilitarianism was the measure of the value of both laws and institutions, fell like a bombshell among a society based on privilege and monopoly. All these great thinkers continued to pour forth theses on the rules which determine one's duty or the faculty of mind which discovers those rules.

In Parliament, and in public speaking, those who exercised the greatest influence on public opinion did so in virtue of the power of oratory at a time when passions were unrestrained, and such topics as the American War of Independence, the French Revolution, and the lengthy suit of Warren Hastings were offered for discussion.

Party violence was at its height; every one, whether of high rank or low, claimed the right to interfere in State affairs whether by advice or action. At every moment sympathetic or hostile demonstrations took place in regard to those whom popular sentiment raised aloft or brought low. On one occasion William Pitt was exalted to a mad degree, and municipalities showered gold upon him; on another occasion Granville was hooted at and hissed with as much

[1] *The Letters of Horace Walpole* (edited by Cunningham, London, 1857–59), are a work of as enduring a character in England as those of Mme. de Sevigné and Voltaire in France.

[2] See Macaulay's admirable *Critical and Historical Essays*, on the thinkers and orators of this period (new edition, 1852, 3 vols. in 8vo; translated into French by Guillame Guizot, 1860–65, 3 vols. in 8vo).

excitement and madness, when the people waited for him to leave the House, and accompanied him with loud shouts ; or Lord Bute, whose very emblems were burnt, emblems so heartily despised—a top-boot and a petticoat.

We have said that passions were utterly unchecked. It would seem that merely local causes were not sufficient to produce such excitement, but that outside influences were also active in increasing it. The Republican enthusiasm which was rampant in France between 1789 and 1792, spread to the shores of England, and even to the heart of the Government. It was the dawn of a new world, a time of fever and illusion when "life itself was a blessing, and youth itself heaven."[1]

We might prolong, but Germany demands our attention, for she claims at this period the literary supremacy of Europe, as a result of many years of great activity.

We must retrace our steps a little in order to observe more closely the wonderful results of the intellectual development during the second half of the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth centuries.

Patriotism, but of a somewhat nervous kind, had been aroused by the victories of Frederick the Great. The effect was to undermine the very foundations of the Empire and expel Austria, which had been regarded both as the head of the Empire and of the movement. Political expansion led to intellectual advance ; the sound of Frederick's victorious drums awoke the German muse. The king himself knew but little of his own literature, for in his palaces at Potsdam and Berlin he paid but scant court to the muses of his native land, being wholly absorbed in doing honours to the language of Voltaire. Rosbach became the Hippocrene of the German lyrical poets. National unity, which had been gradually destroyed by the segregating action of

[1] "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven !"
WORDSWORTH, *French Revolution.*

the Reformation and the Treaty of Westphalia, sought in vain a centre amidst the three or four hundred principalities of the Confederation. Prussia, suddenly rising like a meteor out of the darkness, had attracted the attention of all, owing to the energy of her prince. The hopes of all became centred on her. The event was quite unexpected, and afforded a new inspiration. The school at Halle, or Halberstadt, took up the theme, and received almost at once the title of the Prussian School.

On the other hand, the decisive victory of Bodmer and his school over Gottsched and the partisans of classical tradition, had prepared for some years the way for the great writers of the end of the century.

In spite of the indifference of Frederick II., who later on regretted his mistake, Klopstock gained considerable influence as an innovator, and ranked with Goethe, Schiller, and Herder, among the most distinguished leaders of literary progress.

In 1748 Klopstock's famous *Messiah* appeared. Klopstock, Winckelmann and Lessing [1] introduced a new theory of art at a time when French influence was paramount at Berlin, and Italian music and poetry reigned at Vienna. The new theory consisted in extolling Sophocles, and Shakespeare, that is to say, classical antiquity, the England of the sixteenth century. A return to the ancient models themselves was preached, without the necessity of studying them through the medium of the classics of Louis XIV.'s reign. Racine, Corneille, and the writers of the seventeenth century were accused of having distorted nature under the cloak of convention. These notions and the ideas of Herder served to introduce certain great events which resulted in the freedom of German literature. Hitherto the pure artistic ideal could only be traced in the works of artists themselves, but, thanks to Winckelmann, the study of the beautiful

[1] *The History of Antique Art*, by Winckelmann, appeared in Dresden in 1764, and Lessing's *Laokoon*, in 1766.

was now open to all. Lessing almost simultaneously introduced rational liberty in questions of art. Herder, an art critic, philosopher, poet, and man of letters, both by his theory and example, carried out the reforms of Lessing in a masterly way. As a follower of Kant and Hamann, he had learnt from these two masters how the history of humanity in its earliest form should be studied—the history of nations, of nature, and of poetry. He was inspired with the idea that poetry was the mother-tongue of all nations.[1] In his early writings he traced to its source the history of the ode among ancient peoples, and hence was led to condemn the poor imitations of his contemporaries without even excepting the talented Klopstock and Wieland. He set forth as objects worthy of study Biblical poetry in the first place, then national epics and popular poetry emanating, as it were, from the very soil of the country, and representing the inner life of the people and a true reflection of nature. Herder's influence on the literary movement of his time, whether as critic or writer, was very great, and that despite certain instances of unfairness and injustice. His literary gospel and his admiration for Shakespeare palpably inspired *Götz von Berlichingen*. It was he who stimulated literary effort not only in Germany, but, owing to his large views, which spread abroad, he obtained recognition in all intellectual circles of his idea that the proper study of a nation[2] and its history, their customs, passions, and laws, should be through the medium of their poetry, arts, and language. Winckelmann, Lessing, and Herder prepared the way for Goethe and Schiller, and endowed German literature with the double qualities of philosophic reflection and pure art. As in the most brilliant days of the Italian Renaissance, there was a bourgeoning on all sides, and German poetry welled up from many sources simultaneously.

[1] *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern*, 1778.

[2] *Philosophical Ideas Concerning the History of Man.* Riga, 1784–91. 4 vols.

By a fortunate coincidence the flexible and profound German mind became endowed with scientific philosophy and criticism at the same period. Hegel soon appeared full of confidence in his theory of the inter-connection of all things. He introduced this doctrine as the one true philosophy, including other philosophies, arts, and religions, and as an answer to the riddle of the universe. This elaborate and all-embracing system of metaphysics was developed side by side with the brilliant sensibility of Goethe. As the horizon grew larger the whole of Europe derived benefit.

These changes were in progress in Germany totally independent of external events. Whilst Germany was resounding with the clash of Napoleon's arms, and Vienna and Berlin tremblingly yielded to the conqueror, Weimar, the capital of a very secondary State, owing to the fact that it was the home of poets of genius, became a veritable centre of intellectual life and light. While thrones shook, and Arndt, Korner, and Schenkendorf, like Tyrtæus of old, roused the courage of their country by patriot songs, Goethe remained far above merely national passions and the fitful sentiments of patriotism. He hovered in those lofty and serene regions of thought where hostility between nations does not penetrate, but in which the noblest interests of science and art are furthered.[1]

Herder had raised the standard of humanity and its destiny; Schiller added his part in elevating the idea of humanity by his dramatic talent and depth of feeling; Hegel went further in his transcendental philosophy; Goethe, both as poet and man, was more highly organised than any one of them, and in virtue of that took precedence of them all.

In spite of the clash of arms, Germany continued to progress in the direction of literature and philosophy, and evolved from within the ideas of contemporary criticism

[1] Alfred Mezières, *Goethe: His Life and Works*, 2 vols.

abroad. No advance has been made since then in this respect; we have only remodelled or revived the same notions under other forms.[1] Henceforth, experience or intuition, faith or reason, theorem or proof, intellectual entity or physical reality, in short, the history of the human race and of the organic world progress in close union in search of truth. Germany prescribed for herself a noble programme, which consisted in studying phenomena of all kinds not only in the abstract but in the concrete; in seeking religious feeling elsewhere than in mere dogmas, and poetic beauty otherwise than in myths. It went further, and demanded that one should master history in such a way as to deduce its visible and palpable law with ease; that one should study the wonders of creation and comprehend their most secret life principle; that one should finally, by dint of hidden powers, penetrate the mysteries which philology and archæology combined were endeavouring to solve in regard to the monuments of antiquity. In the entire intellectual history of the fatherland of Goethe, Herder and Beethoven, both the end of that century, whose dawn had seen the zenith of the genius of Leibniz, and the early years of the nineteenth century were unparalleled. Frederick Wolf remodelled philology when he published his famous *Prolegomena*,[2] and Kant was originator of the most complete

[1] Taine, Carlyle, de Sanctis, the three chief critics of the nineteenth century, bear witness to this fact in France, England, and Italy. Taine confesses to having spent a whole year in reading Hegel and deriving thence the most vivid impressions of his life. Carlyle declares that the principal object of the modern mind should be to meditate on the main ideas of German metaphysics, which may be reduced to a single one, namely, evolution. Again, de Sanctis declares the roots of modern thought are to be found in Hegel's philosophy.

[2] Wolf's influence has been very considerable, both owing to his writings and his lectures. Traces of it may be seen in the subsequent works of Bœkh, Ottfried, Müller, Welcher, Grote, Guigniaut, Fauriel, and Egger, among his opponents as well as among his followers. His "anti-Homeric" hypothesis may appear contestable, but his learning was above dispute.

philosophical evolution since the time of Descartes and Bacon, for he made criticism of the human mind the sole basis of all inquiry. In like manner Alexander Humboldt introduced an important scientific movement, and his brother William laid down the laws of language; Savigny revealed new horizons in the realm of jurisprudence; Niebuhr, a man of great erudition, struck out a new line in history, and men of genius whose names are on every lip showed themselves masters in music and poetry. It was not surprising that Germany and the German nation should appear to her sons as the embodiment of the universal spirit and of the absolute idea, for she had never before attained to such intellectual greatness.

The thinkers wanted to go so far; they plunged so recklessly into abstract regions that they found themselves in depths never sounded by man throughout eighteen centuries. Having failed to grasp the comprehensible, they abandoned their researches weary and discouraged.

Then appeared the *mal de siècle*, the dissatisfaction of *Werther*[1] and of *Faust*, similar to that which troubled the men of the first century of our era, that *tedium vitæ* of Tacitus, which became the *ἀθυμία* of Chrysostom[2] and, under the name of *acedia*, or melancholy, troubled the mystic souls of the twelfth century in the retirement of their monasteries. We recognise the same symptoms in the period under discussion: the feverish idleness, the curious inquiry into the unknown, the distaste for the present state of things and vague desire for a nobler ideal and more lasting happiness,

[1] Nicolai, the enthusiastic critic of Goethe, Herder, and Wieland, and precursor of the Transition School, which during the next century was to occupy a middle position between the antiquated Classical School and the vagaries of Romanticism, endeavoured to re-write, in a less exaggerated style, *Werther*, the fame of which was so great as to tinge all Europe with melancholy.

[2] The homily, addressed by St. John Chrysostom to young Stagyrus, who entered a cloister to submit himself to discipline, having found peace of mind nowhere, might just as well have been addressed to Goethe's Werther.

the unsatisfied longings for the infinite. All contemporary literature bore this impress, and so rapidly was it communicated that neither philosophy nor poetry throughout Europe was free from the tinge of melancholy and doubt.

This bitter and incurable doubt had replaced strong faith, noble passions, and great enthusiasm in the heart of every one ; no one any longer believed in the former motive forces of action. Lord Byron's verse rang out loud, grim, and violent amidst this great blank, amidst the ruin brought by war and revolution, and such poetry was well attuned to a period of such general universal devastation.

Chateaubriand was one of the first to introduce this melancholy, one of the most characteristic marks of the early years of the nineteenth century, amidst the barren literary work of the First Empire in France. Almost simultaneously appeared Chateaubriand's *René*, filling the world with his sorrowful plaints, Byron's *Lara* and *Manfred*, Senancour's *Oberman*—a vague combination of *Werther* and *René*, and finally the famous *Letters of Jacopo Ortis*, by Ugo Foscolo, a strange mixture of truth and exaggeration, of declamatory rhetoric and genuine eloquence, the fame of which spread throughout Europe.

The poets of the preceding century had proved insipid because they represented things in a too soft and gentle light ; their successors, on the other hand, could not find colours dark enough to correspond to the gloom of their sentiments. The writers of the "Werther school" invited the sympathy of every one for their real or imaginary woes. Their effusions, inspired by troubles of all kinds, but which always reverted to the same idea of disenchantment, presented, as in the case of Joseph Delorme, an inconceivable chaos. Extravagant ideas, recent reminiscences, the germs of noble thoughts, pious flights succeeding irreverent outbursts, were blended confusedly against a background of despair.[1]

[1] See the preface of *Joseph Delorme*, by Sainte-Beuve.

The Romantic movement was an accomplished fact, and made rapid strides in France, though very different in stamp from its earlier characteristics. The name and the idea came from Germany. At the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century Tieck and the two Schlegels headed a movement which prescribed the return to the art and poetry of the Middle Ages, which had their origin in the *romance*—a composition in the vulgar tongue. This new movement, somewhat opposed to that represented by the names of Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, and Lessing, was known as Romanticism. Mme. de Staël introduced it to France, and Chateaubriand contributed its initial characteristic, that of introducing the appreciation for and love of national art into a land where, since the reign of Charles, Greek and Latin had been held up as models and antique art had held predominance. The name remained, though with a different significance, and was less clearly defined according as one or other of the influences which had given it birth were more or less in the ascendant. There were, among other elements, the lyrical individualism of Jean Jacques Rousseau, the common ancestor of Byron, Goethe, Schiller, Lamartine, and Victor Hugo ; the unexpected revival of mysticism ; the return to national[1] sources of inspiration and the diffusion of foreign literatures.

[1] See the preface of *Jean Sbogar*, by Nodier, for a clear understanding of what the leaders of the movement about 1820 understood by the term "Romanticism."

CHAPTER XVIII

The beginning of the Romantic movement, the effects of which influence the whole of Europe—In every realm of thought vast prospects are opened up—Reorganisation of study—The cultivation of the purely imaginative side—Pure philosophy—Romantic poetry—Its transformations and different expression in France, England, Italy, Spain, Russia, Poland, Scandinavia.

§ 1.

The French Romantic movement appeared a generation later than the German. The latter, following the great leaders, saw the formation of that original school which included Armin, Immermann, Tieck Brentano, Chamirro, Novalis,[1] who by their noble attempts embodied the chief elements of inspiration of the school—enthusiasm, ardent love of the picturesque, an unbounded desire for the abnormal, linked with a profound sensibility.

The turmoil of the Revolution and the organised massacres of the Empire had proved most formidable obstacles to intellectual intercourse. The conditions obtaining gave little time for meditation, and hardly allowed opportunity for artistic development. There was neither sufficient leisure

[1] Let us for a moment linger in the company of one of them, the sympathetic Novalis. Of him Schleiermacher relates that all who saw him were deeply impressed with the twofold perfection, physical and moral, of "this divine youth," to whom the world appeared one long poem. Death, alas! awaited him at a turn in the road on which he wandered so full of hope. He left behind only admirable attempts—romantic episodes, hymns, thoughts, and fragments.

nor liberty. France, demoralised by victory and conquest, vainly endeavoured to retrieve her literary glory and past triumphs.

We must return to the beginning of the century. The dawn appeared unpromising. Literature, tortured with revolutionary crises, weak and exhausted, struggled to regather strength. Encouragement and help from official sources did not succeed in infusing new life. The great works introduced from abroad, such as Goethe's *Faust*,[1] which were circulated with some diffidence in France, were barely understood. Ideas withered and died amidst general unproductiveness. Tragedy and ode became mere lifeless forms. In this age of heroes, heroic songs were absent ; in their place are found miserable panegyrics of power, insipid poems or indifferent translations.[2] Comedy could not rise above vulgarity, and was no longer accorded the right of truthfully depicting men and manners.[3] General prose-writing ceased or degenerated under the continual menace of prosecution. Oratory only re-echoed the voice of the master of rhetoric, and the entire press was reduced to silence or boundless adulation. It was not likely that Napoleon, with his threatening dislike to all that savoured of liberty or indicative of boldness, would promote an era of great intellectuality. Moreover, it was an unlucky time to adopt literature as a profession, for from one end of Europe to the other the dogs of war were let loose ; all attention was

[1] In 1808 Madame de Staël had some scenes from *Faust* performed by her private company in the theatre at Coppet, and Schlegel witnessed the performance with her. In France the editors of the *Journal des Débats* heaped scorn on this work as being the most marked type of "frantic poetry."

[2] Whilst Baour-Lormian was correcting his translation of Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* and finishing the tragedy of *Omasis*, Millevoye was translating into verse Homer's *Iliad*, Anacreon's *Odes*, and Virgil's *Bucolics*.

[3] We may mention in passing the name of Picard, a precursor of Scribe, whose comedies are the living diary of the period, the jovial picture of contemporary manners and vagaries.

drawn to the warlike flourish of trumpets, and the clash of arms drowned all other sounds. All emotion became centred on those who fought and those who laid down their lives. The youth of France, educated in the military colleges amid the constant roll of drums, knew beforehand they were destined for wholesale slaughter. But even for those who escaped the general levy of war in which so many noble lives were sacrificed, the literary life afforded little but intellectual satisfaction, certainly not material advantage or peace. To have expected more would have been a pure illusion.

Noble minds, such as Chateaubriand and Madame de Staël, put themselves, it is true, at the head of the literary movement of their time ; but in their case, their private fortune, high rank, personal distinction, or residence abroad, accorded them a relative independence of thought and action. In the case of others it was necessary to choose between three inevitable conditions—to offer incense to the idol of the day ; to voluntarily refrain from expressing one's own ideas [1] until better times ; or to resign oneself to becoming the instrument of tyranny, and in the name of literature to write against the true interest of letters. "There are times," says Chateaubriand, "when we must be economical even of scorn, on account of the number of cases deserving it." D'Avrigny, Esménard, Lacretelle, Lemontey were such slaves to their own necessity ; on the registers of this intellectual custom-house we find the names of many who would, under a new Government, have been foremost among the defenders of liberalism.

In default of more honourable measures an active censure was introduced, that hateful and absurdly meticulous censure

[1] "All with the exception of six poets bowed down before Napoleon, and the six thinkers alone remained standing while the whole world knelt to him. They were Ducis, Delille, Madame de Staël, Benjamin Constant, Chateaubriand, and Lemercier" (Victor Hugo, *Discours de réception à l'Académie française*). Can we admit the truth of this in the case of Benjamin Constant ?

which, not content with merely suppressing newspapers or, by indicating subjects for their articles, rendered them ridiculous, but which, in seeing allusions everywhere, mutilated the works of bygone ages equally with those of modern times. Such censure corrected Racine, emasculated Corneille, and laid Molière under an interdict. The First Empire was, indeed, a terrible epoch, not only in respect of imaginative literature, but also in all branches of study.[1]

Eventually the fall of this crushing despotism, the return of the Bourbon family and of an aristocracy which had always honoured, patronised, and cultivated letters; later the general European influences, and the great influx of foreign elements into the national life—all contributed to the quickening of deadened imaginations.

§ 2.

After the bloodstained years in which France had consumed her energy, resources, and entire activity in civil strife or on the battlefield, there were at last hopes of peace. The world set free, breathed freely once more. No epoch ever looked more favourable to the re-awakening of thought; never had public opinion and the aspirations of lofty minds seemed more united. The classical school and its works had had their day. The time had come for acting upon the advice already given by Théophile de Vian to his contemporaries in the seventeenth century: "Write for the man of to-day." To appeal to men with new ideals, a new language and new thoughts are needed.

On all sides the prospect widened. In philosophy, politics, history, literature, the drama, in external form

[1] Despite the number of grammars published then for want of other books, the science of language was but meagrely developed in them. "Philology, the foundation of all good literature," says Dacier, in his report addressed to Napoleon I., "on which all accuracy of history rests, can hardly show any students."

Only the contemplation of the physical universe could produce such works as Laplace's *Mécanique céleste* or Lagrange's *Mécanique analytique*.

as well as in the underlying idea, the need for a brilliant development was seen and its success foreshadowed. The great advance made in historical theory and the proper materials for such study alone deserve an entire chapter. In England Henry Hallam's synthetic work illumined the general literature of Europe, unstudied hitherto. After a time Chateaubriand gave the signal for a fundamental change in the study of history, a change which permeated the whole of Europe. This departure, originating in the general curiosity concerning the Middle Ages, was continued by the successive efforts of Lingard, and especially Macaulay in England, who in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1828, laid the foundations of a new method of narration, with the object of uniting example and principle, model and theory. The method was followed by Ranke in Germany, by Cantu in Italy, by Lafuente in Spain; in Russian and Scandinavian literature by Karamzine, Geüer, and Allen; in France by Augustin Thierry, Guizot, and their numerous school, each nation wishing to reconstitute its history. Till quite recently the narration of history had consisted of piling fact upon fact, of filling volumes with wars, treaties of peace, genealogies, and marriages. This side of history had been developed to excess. It now became necessary to combine the painting of manners with the account of deeds, and was further essential to assign to each of the past centuries its true place, its moral signification, and its characteristics.

The history of literature profited greatly by this development. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries criticism had been for the most part insufficient and superficial in virtue, because they claimed to measure the inspiration of writers by invariable rules. Formerly a narrow admiration for the classics, for traditional taste, and oratory had prevailed. The evolutionary side of thought, the picturesque value of environment, local colour, and the personal equation in literature escaped them. The period of historic criticism,

inaugurated in Germany in the preceding century, introduced into France by Madame de Staël and Benjamin Constant, and into England by Hallam, came to an end about 1830. Men of the stamp of Villemain and Sainte-Beuve gave it an unexpected impetus, brilliance, and expansion. But recently when the Germans were loudly boasting of Lessing and Winckelmann, France thought to possess in La Harpe the world's first critic. She had long ignored, misunderstood, or caricatured Shakespeare. The writers of the old classical school would willingly have confined the advance of human thought within their own limits. Suddenly the past was illuminated with brilliant light; the dust of centuries was quickened; men learnt at last to appreciate other nations and other points of view.

§ 3.

Knowledge of an entirely new character sprang up in the boundless fields of learning. Between 1820 and 1840 Auguste Comte,[1] preparing the way for the English school of Herbert Spencer, was tracing with steady hand the outlines of sociology and proceeding to the classification of periods of history. The discovery of prehistoric man[2] came as a revelation to natural science. A book on the philosophy of history by a Neapolitan, Giovanni Baptisto Vico,[3] published in French by Michelet in 1827, led many

[1] An eminent critic calls Auguste Comte the greatest intellectual influence of his age.

[2] The study of prehistoric times in reality dates from the discoveries of Boucher and Perthes (1836).

[3] The *Principii di una Scienza nuova d'in-torno alla commune natura delle nazioni*, published at Naples in 1725, had remained lost in obscurity. The translation by Michelet into French rendered it world-famous. The Italian scholar, lawyer, and philosopher had propounded the method of the modern historic school, a method at once philosophical and picturesque, the two-fold aim of which is to clothe each epoch with its own particular dress, and to subordinate its development to the oft-repeated idea of progress and the conditions of progress. Vico foreshadowed by a century the theories of the Germans, Frederick Wolf and Niebuhn, in

thoughtful minds to the study of successive epochs and of the intricate fabric of human progress.

In Germany Francis Bopp has just created comparative philology. At the same time and by the same proceeding he entirely changed the aspect of science. He reorganised linguistic research and profoundly modified ethnography and history and shed unexpected light on the past history of humanity. Almost immediately there was forthcoming a marvellous reconstruction of lost languages and literatures. Works of erudition assumed a philosophic and historic value hitherto unsuspected. The West showed a very keen desire to learn the religious symbols and the languages of the East.[1]

From the day when the divining genius of Champollion discovered the key to the hieroglyphics, numerous documents were forthcoming to explain the practices, customs, and ideas of ancient Egypt. India, enigmatic and mysterious, attracted the attention even more strongly than the land of the Pharaohs. Cultured minds were dazzled when, behind the Acropolis and Mt. Sion, behind Greece and Judæa, which were regarded as the intellectual or religious homes of modern peoples, and behind the pyramids of Egypt (now to be explained historically), behind them all stood the Hindoo pagoda, burdened with poetry and mystery. In France, Germany, and England great zeal was shown in setting up again or collecting the fragments of the monuments of ancient India, or in reconstituting the tombs of that civilisation already old when seen by the army of Alexander. There seemed to be a return

regarding certain personages of antiquity, such as Homer, Hercules, or Romulus, as either purely allegorical or as the sum total of a number of individuals. It was this thinker, at times strange and paradoxical, that gave Auguste Comte the foundations of his Positivist philosophy.

[1] See the introduction by Michel Bréal to the French edition, 1866, of the *Comparative Grammar of Sanskrit, Zend, Greek, Latin, Lithuanian, Ancient Slavonic, Gothic, and German*, by Francis Bopp (Berlin, 1833–1849; Paris, 1867–72, 4 vols. in 8vo).

of the same enthusiasm in Europe which inspired the scholars of the Renaissance, who dreamed of restoring Greece and Rome. Modern philosophy underwent the same experience in respect to Brahman literature as they had experienced earlier in the study of the ancient classics, and the results considerably widened the conclusions already achieved. It was now possible, under the guidance of Bopp and the scholars who followed him,[1] to read the history of the languages in almost every word. It was not sufficient to establish the close relationship of Greek and Sanskrit; scholars wished to demonstrate the identity of idea and intellectual methods of the two sister races, Aryans and Greeks. The mysticism in the heroic songs of ancient India was compared with that of the mythology of Greek epic, and striking similarities were shown to exist.

A like ardour was manifested in pure classical archæology independent of questions of grammar, and rendered possible the explanation of all forms of the material and intellectual life of the ancients. Epigraphy, a new study, threw much light on the organisation of the ancient world, revealing things not contained in books, such as the daily life of the mass of the people, their dress, customs, ceremonies, faith, and at the same time affording valuable evidence upon historical events. No effort was too great which might replace a word in an inscription, or restore the fragment of a statue, or supply the date of a monument.

Again the history of art became a genuine science, owing to the fact that the important study of the evolution of style was now substituted for the study of individual works and the biography of artists.

The scholars of the sixteenth, also some of seventeenth

[1] Eugène Burnouf, a follower of Bopp, was a philologist of genius, the restorer of ancient civilisations and of languages, the very name of which was hardly known prior to his day, such as Zend and Pâli. He was a reliable historian of religious movements, the real meaning of which had up to then escaped criticism. He was the author of the *Commentaries on the Yaçna* (1833–4, in 8vo).

and eighteenth centuries were very widely read; they moulded their lives upon the old Greek and Roman model. They were thorough masters of the classical languages, and in the detailed discussion of words—apart from questions of etymology—their knowledge was worthy of all admiration. In spite of this, their researches produced but superficial results. However extensive their labours, they never exceeded a certain standard of exactness in the matter of facts, nor a certain ideal in regard to works of art or sentiment, the genuine search for the origin, cause, or attendant circumstances of phenomena being nearly always wanting. Being ignorant of the history of several great nations, and having consequently no idea of the extent of their influence, they could only perceive and comprehend one side of questions in history or literature. They further lacked the thousands of means of comparison whence broader views and more reliable principles, more impartial and more definite appreciations, are formed. Modern scholars of the school of Wolf, Bœckh, and Ottfried Müller in Germany, and of Letronne in France, later on extended to a remarkable degree the conception of philology. In every direction they remoulded the notions of ideas and facts by applying all the resources of learning to political history, the archæology of monuments, the study of languages and of myths and religions. It was the critical method which the comprehensive genius of Leibniz had discovered, and which Germany has the honour of having first adopted. In former years, as in olden times, philology had been identified with pure grammatical studies, and was confined to the exposition of ancient texts;[1] but henceforth its object was no less than to grasp the ancient mind, Greek or Oriental, in its entirety, in its philosophical, literary and artistic evolution, in works of faith, reason, sentiment, or imagination.[2] Philology, with

[1] See Renan's *Mélanges d'histoire et de voyages*—the history of classical philology in early times.

[2] Such is the career which Max Müller later opened up for philology

the aid of comparative mythology, aspired to formulate a positive theory of the religious idea as understood from its earlier and unconscious formation. The theologies were shaken to their very foundations, and were in no small danger when certain important facts of antiquity became known, which evidently threw great light on the origin of cosmogony. Hitherto the principles of mythology had remained obscure and inexplicable. They had no real connection with the social conditions which had given them birth. The knowledge of the Vedas and the Indian deities changed everything. The Aryan mythologies appeared as a homogeneous group, also the languages of the same stock. Primitive formations were no more veiled in mystery. There was no longer anything illogical and arbitrary in their successive "revelations." People were astonished at the numerous analogies which could be drawn between the most opposed systems of religion—between Aryan pantheism, for example, and Biblical monotheism;[1] between Indra, the King of the gods, the hero of thunder and storm, author and preserver of life, and Jehovah, the one true God. But these studies threw the fullest light on the origin and vicissitudes of the ancient Nature worship,[2] which in a

in his celebrated definition. More recent developments, as Mr. Salomon Reinach has remarked, consisted in showing that religion, apart from mythology, should be studied by preference among the most ancient peoples, who correspond to the Greeks and Hebrews long before the *Iliad* and the *Bible* were compiled. These researches, carried on first in England, are destined to a vast expansion in the twentieth century, and will exercise a beneficent influence in social questions, revealing the thoroughly human and social origin of many of the theological illusions which the broad daylight of science has not yet succeeded in dispelling.

[1] At the present time people have compared, without committing an anachronism, the hymns of Vicvamitra, of Renou, his son, of Pragâtha, or Vamâdeva, with the works of Moses and the songs of David, and other children of Israel, who also glorified in similar terms the greatness of their God and the strength of His arm.

[2] In France, Benjamin Constant, in his book, *De la Religion* (1824–31, 5 vols. in 8vo), revealed the first symptoms of the new historic method

very distant past had been common to all branches of the Indo-European family. Philology was henceforth involved in the most burning questions of religious polemics, and had transposed the terms of philosophical controversy by the latest discoveries, and by applying the same rigorous method to the premisses of Christianity as to the legends of Greece or India.

§ 4.

We have wandered rather far from our path, and must return to the development of the Romantic movement.

It was more especially towards the realm of pure imagination and to the boundless domain of poetry that youthful ardour, eager to fathom the unknown, was attracted. Chateaubriand, as we have said above, had transformed poetic art and imagination in France, and his influence had spread throughout Europe. The sense of liberty in literature had been restored by him. In France, influential writers had arisen almost in a night; Alfred de Vigny was their leader. By the voice of *Eloa* a whole generation of young poets were roused to a more genuine and more subtle art than that of the eighteenth century. The lyre of Lamartine having once been heard, there was a warm welcome for the first volume of the *Meditations*, which spoke to the world in accents hitherto unknown. People could not praise sufficiently this prince of elegy, this truly inspired poet, who heard all the sad and sweet sentiments of which human nature is capable in the beating of his own heart, and was able to express them in the most melodious tone.

of interpretation of myths, of which Volney had already caught a glimpse. He thus opened up the way for religious criticism, in which he was successfully followed by Fauriel, J. J. Ampère, Guignant, Quinet, Scherer Renan, Maury, Joubert, Baudry, Bréal and others. See Max Müller, *History of Ancient Sanscrit Literature;* Lasson, *Indisch, Alterthumsk,* vol. i.; Adalbert Kuhn, *Die Urgeschichte der indogermanischen Völker,* in the *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung,* vol. iv.; Alfred Maury, *Croyances et Légendes d'antiquité,* 2nd ed., 1863; Barth, *Des religions de l'Inde* in the *Enclycopédie des sciences religieuses,* 1879.

Almost simultaneously Victor Hugo, a powerful, strange, unequal, and prodigious writer, appeared. He had given to the world his revolutionary preface to *Cromwell*, which became the inspiration of the literary revolutionists.[1] It substituted drama for tragedy, the man in flesh and blood for the character ; it allowed for the descent from the ideal to the real, and exhibited a style having all the advantages of epic, lyric, serious, or comic elements. For nearly seventy years Hugo was the intellectual leader of his age. He produced poem after poem, play after play, novel after novel, everything finite or infinite, past, present, or future, reflected in that mighty brain always in a state of energetic production. At length, when Lamartine's talent was losing its early freshness, and Victor Hugo's was tending to the production of exasperated tirades, Musset appeared. He was very young, but revealed that romantic melancholy or giving of harmonious expression to capricious revolt against wisdom and reason which was the evil of his day.

In the study of Hugo, Lamartine, and Musset people grew enthusiastic and fervent. A strong faith was stirring the younger generation. There was a great outburst of talent, inspiration being communicated by the interchange of ideas. We see here the rare spectacle of a closely allied group of innovators striving and living for art's sake, for the pure joy of creative work, for the satisfaction of feeling and expressing the transports of lyrical imagination.[2] What

[1] We must, however, remember that the French Romantic movement, which commenced in the publication of *Cromwell* (1827), had been preceded by another form of Romanticism which manifested itself in the work of Stendhal entitled, *Racine and Shakespeare*, 1822.

[2] "It was a glorious time, a time of violent hatreds and strong affections, of great mutual help. People fought to the death, offered passionate resistance, applauded madly, tore each other to pieces, or set up altars to one another. Soon the people attacked not only the drama as represented on the stage, but the authors who guided and maintained public opinion. It was also a joy to see the crowd on the day following the eagerly disputed victims, rushing at the newspaper, ready to tear it into a thousand pieces should the critic not take the same side as the

could Baour-Lormain, Viennet, or the belated followers of older forms of poetry avail against such enthusiasts? A time of waiting followed, and then some of the results were manifest. The followers of Shakespeare, Calderon, and the author of *Hernani* were masters of the drama and the novel. A group of privileged and talented men reaped the harvest of the labours of a heedless generation.

Romanticism had begun by proclaiming freedom in art. Novelists and poets gave rein to feelings and their expression. Early ages had accorded mankind the right to think freely; the nineteenth century added that of loving freely. Never before had the praises of love been so ardently and eloquently sung. "Sentimental Romanticism had given the human soul a boundless heaven in which to spread its wings and take flight," according to Henry Bérenger in his *L'âme d'un siècle.*

There had been a similar instantaneous reawakening of soul and intelligence in other countries where the same likely conditions existed. The nations of Europe, hardly recovered from the storm of revolutions and the reaction from such upheavals which had shaken them to their depths, longed for rest and the calmness of peace. Time was necessary to gauge their own powers, to enter into possession of their strength and resources before the great social and industrial conflicts which were to succeed sanguinary warfare. There was a quarter of a century of truce—a truce of poetry and sentiment. It apparently was the never-to-be-forgotten period when Europe breathed nothing but the ideal, love, and harmony. On all sides we see a noble emulation, in Germany as in France, in England as in Italy, in Spain as in Slavonic and Scandinavian countries.

§ 5.

Although the way for the Romantic movement in France

reader. Those happy days of poetic contests, those delightful hours will never come again" (Jules Janin, *Journal des Débats*, July 6, 1863).

had been prepared for many years previously by such writers as Jean Jacques Rousseau and Bernardin de St. Pierre, Germany must be accredited, as has already been pointed out, with having formulated its principles and given it its impetus. As early as 1797, August William Schlegel, who, in collaboration with Tieck, founded the memorable *Athenæum*, worked out its programme, which was subsequently modified and enlarged by the literary cosmopolitanism of Goethe. Schlegel was endowed with an almost boundless capacity for work; he was a poet, translator, critic, orientalist, and philosopher, and exercised an enormous influence in the direction of national and foreign thought. As a brilliant interpreter of Calderon and of Shakespeare he had revealed to the English themselves unsuspected beauties in their favourite poet, and in gratitude they named him the "Ultra-Shakespearian." Schlegel stands out as a great literary reformer owing to his splendid translations which, with those of Voss, have been justly acknowledged to have afforded a contribution to the works of all ages and all countries, while at the same time being models of German style. He was also conspicuous for the penetrative force of his genius, inconstant and hasty by the very wealth of original ideas, which he shed on all topics like so many rays of light.

There is much to be said also for the great intellectual activity of other leaders of the Romantic School. Frederick Schlegel, his brother, whose fecundity of idea, breadth of thought, and varied imagination and learning were not less wonderful. John Paul Richter, called the "Unique" because, indeed, no genuinely poetic nature had ever combined all colours and all tones into a variegated chaos with more astonishing effect; or, again, Chamisso[1] and the

[1] Chamisso de Boncourt is one of the most difficult figures of modern literature to understand and to explain. His dual nature is explained by his French birth and German education. He possessed innate and, hidden in the depths of his personality, quick and ready powers of thought, alternatively ironical and enthusiastic. With this he combined subsequently the taste for the fantastic, and the love of the sentimental and profound, which are the characteristics of the German mind.

strange tale-writer Hoffmann.[1] We must notice, on the other hand, not only the individualistic influence of the Swabian School of Ludwig Uhland, which early broke away from the Romantic School and was able to free itself from its exaggerated and fantastic elements, but also the remodelling of the school, to be known henceforth as "Young Germany,"[2] which later, under the inspiration of Bœrne, Heinrich Heine, Laube, Freitigrath, and George Herwegh,[3] was to survive the tumultuous years of 1830–48, and to lead the minds of men to other ends than art and æsthetic sentiment. Its aim was to spread social and political education in every possible form.

About the year 1830 the Austrian School of Grün and Lenau was developing on its own lines, and the most exquisite lyrical poems were produced by the latter, the tender and melancholy Nicholas Lenau. His life was a continual struggle between his passionate, nervous, and enthusiastic sensibility, and the capricious emotions of his sceptical nature. Yet he was enamoured of the ideal, and suffered the torments of a conscience tossed between the misery of doubt and the need for faith. But the plaints of his wounded heart, the emotions and storms which shook his reason and reduced it to the verge of madness, were expressed with a very touching charm of melancholy, the memory of which will not die.

In this way many brilliant pages were added one by one to the literary history of Germany.

[1] The *Fantastic Tales* of Hoffmann, the success of which was enormous, combine the most thoroughgoing realism with strange and terrible hallucinations of the supernatural.

[2] A particular style was greatly in favour, namely, the light capricious style which Bœrne has borrowed from John Paul Richter, and which Heine has further elaborated with his vigour and light-heartedness.

[3] George Herwegh, a bitter opponent of monarchy and tyranny, became naturalised as a Swiss citizen. His *Poésies à un vivant*, (1841–44) produced a great impression in the literary circle known as "Young Germany." It seemed as if the proud knight, Ulrich von Hutten had returned to the world in the exasperated verses of Herwegh.

§ 6.

Romanticism in England did not spread with a single, powerful, and irresistible movement. Its progress and plan were more measured in its early beginnings when William Cowper, disgusted with the artificiality and empty phraseology of the dying eighteenth century,[1] raised his voice against vain rhetoric, and re-echoed the cry of revolt already uttered by Wieland and Goethe. There were two distinct periods, the first prior to 1812, when the attempts of Wordsworth and Coleridge consisted only in rejecting the artificial conventions of style, and when the romance writers, very conservative of routine and of the laws of strict morality, did not allow themselves in their early efforts to exceed the bounds of a purely artistic ambition ; the second, on the other hand, marked by tumultuous times, and the moral crisis due to the advent of Byron, whose success contested in England, spread on the Continent like a contagious and compassionate enthusiasm for art. Amidst the storms of a fevered existence, Byron had the glory of himself ruling violent movement ; its effects were re-echoed abroad in a remarkably intense manner. While Byron's taste was classical, his temperament romantic, this son of the eighteenth century hesitated between the ideal of the passionate and the calmly conceived works of art. He glorified Pope, banished the law of the Three Unities from Tragedy and the symmetrical phrase and well-balanced style, but he never lost the continuous harmony of his verse, his perfection of style, and superior qualities. But the vehemence of his opinions soon carried him far beyond the bounds of the Classical School. He appealed to the public first with the powerful poem, *Harold* (1812), and his name resounded throughout Europe amidst adverse criticism and jealous rivalry. At one stroke all literary nations became followers of Byron.

[1] At this psychological moment on the side of Cowper appeared poets of very different temperament, such as Robert Burns, Crabbe, and William Blake

Walter Scott was one of Byron's contemporaries. The popular bard of his day became the incomparable painter of the manners of the past. The author of the Waverley Novels was for France, as well as England, the founder of the modern novel; he was also one of the reformers of historical writing. Before his time it lacked the dramatic and the picturesque elements. He inspired the Frenchmen, Augustin Thierry and Barante, with the taste for colour and the passion for life. His influence became European, and had its effect in different ways on Manzoni in Italy, Fouqué in Germany, and in France on Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, De Vigny, Mérimée, and Balzac and his successors.

The English Romantic movement in its double and successive manifestation displayed an almost magical power in stirring men's minds. It was a remarkable "revival," for it sounded, we must repeat, in the notes of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, before inspiring Byron and Shelley, and quickening the public imagination in a marvellous manner.

Each of these remarkable poets really deserve our prolonged attention: Wordsworth, on account of his exquisite simplicity which he clothed, saw in every-day realities the reflection of the ideal; Coleridge, on account of the force of his lyric vein and the loftiness of his philosophical meditations;[1] Southey, because of the astonishing fantasy of his imagination always away from earth; Byron, for the unbridled power and splendour of his poetic temperament;

[1] Coleridge, living at Keswick, in the heart of the English lakes, near to Southey and Wordsworth, formed with them the "Lake School," a sentimental school of poetry which had a great vogue in England because it combined the delicate analysis of sentiments with the love of nature. He wrote his *Love Poems* and *Meditations; Odes*, genuinely sublime at times, *Lyrical Ballads*, novels and plays. The opium habit which he acquired so injured his health that anxiety was felt for his reason. Coleridge, who was subject to all emotions and was capable of understanding all systems, had flashes of genius which were revealed in sudden and brilliant aspirations; nevertheless his talent remained fragmentary and incomplete.

and Shelley, for the breadth and flexibility of his genius. While still but comparatively young, he was only twenty-nine, Shelley's life of turmoil came to its tragic end. He was [1] a brilliant genius, and the author of some of the most inspired poetry that has ever been written. It is changing as the sea, now distant and intangible, now personal and romantic like that of Byron's *Childe Harold*. His obsequies were ancient in style ; his body cast ashore was burned on a pyre, his heart taken to Rome and entombed with the inscription, *Cor cordium*. He disappeared, says Gabriel Sarrazin, leaving the memory of a figure of light and legend.[2]

§ 7.

Italy now claims our attention, and proclaims that she was not less eager than other European nations to extol the worship of passion, sentiment, and ideas at a time of universal artistic ferment which might well be termed the trumpet-call to humanity.

A warm patriotism animates her poetry from the very beginning of the nineteenth century. Ugo Foscolo, whose name has just been quoted, Giusti, Leopardi, wrote with emotion and force with a view to arousing the nation. The conciseness and energetic seriousness of Leopardi's verse recall the vigour of the ancient Latin muse. He is modern in the melancholy of his songs, which are more

[1] In 1822 Shelley was drowned in the Bay of Spezzia at the age of twenty-nine. His contemporary and rival, John Keats, one of the greatest poets any country has produced, did not survive his twenty-fifth year.

[2] In this too rapid *résumé* we have omitted a third influence which made itself felt in a remarkable way in English Romanticism. It was the attempt to re-establish the poets of the time of Elizabeth, who were so greatly under the sway of Italian taste, such as Fletcher and the followers of Spenser. This attempt was made by a group of writers, of whom John Keats was leader, and whose supporter, Charles Lamb, was a creator of ideas and a humorist of the school of Addison, Swift, Steele, Goldsmith, and a critic of great warmth and originality.

hopeless and inexorable than the speculative pessimism of Schopenhauer. He had a strange career. He was a philologist at sixteen,[1] a philosopher at twenty, a poet at twenty-five, and was destined to die very young but at the height of his fame. When many others have hardly begun to live, Leopardi had already won the palms of a twofold glory. He was extraordinarily precocious, but unfortunately was destined, early in life, to pay the penalty of these exceptional and wonderful natural gifts by grave physical disorders and the ceaseless torture of two mortal maladies, to which the secret troubles of an irritable and disillusioned mind but added bitterness. Hence arose these complaints against human destiny, against his own period, on the part of the author of *Il Parini* and the great lyrical poet of the *Ricordanze*. Another characteristic of Leopardi's was that of drawing the sole inspiration from the bitter sources of melancholy—a melancholy to be found everywhere, in the present, the past, in nature, and in mankind—a melancholy revealed in argument or verse according as the author expressed himself as philosopher or poet. There was also a constant reference made to death which imparted a systematic bitterness to the ineffable sweetness of his elegies.[2]

Among other favourites of the muse we may mention Vittorelli, Ricciardi, and the celebrated Silvio Pellico, who owes his reputation as much to his misfortunes as to his works. These poets were brilliant rivals in the work of regeneration which they contemplated; they stimulated their country with their praise, their advice, or their plaintive reminiscences, and nobly cherished the hope that inspired them, the hope of restoring the nation by literature. Finally

[1] He was little more than a youth. His works on philology make him known to the scholars of Italy and Germany. Akerblad, the Swedish philologist, welcomed his scientific works with admiration.

[2] See the biography of the poet and the final edition of his works, in prose and verse, published at Florence in 1845 by Antonio Ranieri, the great friend, the *Pylades* of Leopardi; also the splendid translation into French verse by Auguste Lacaussade.

Manzoni led the Romantic movement, and did not wait for the new French Pleiad to declare himself the apostle of a literary renaissance. Before Victor Hugo had given to the world the startling preface to *Cromwell*, Manzoni had addressed a French letter to the critic of the *Lycée* (Mons. Chauvet), the purport of which was the Unities of Time and Place and his projects for theatrical reform. He became the chief of the Italian school of *Coloristes*, which was chiefly concerned with the brilliance of style as regards imagery and colour.

Under the Italian sky talent throve and was animated with equal zeal in arousing patriotic memories and hopes, and in conjunction with men of action and in preparing for the coming era of Renaissance.

§ 8.

A still greater enthusiasm characterised the Spanish poets; one might almost believe new blood had been infused into the veins of Castile's singers. Byron, Walter Scott, Victor Hugo, Lamartine were read everywhere. Youthful enthusiasts yearned to follow their example. Ventura de la Vega, Breton de los Herreros, Quintana, were among the leaders of reform in art, and were further inspired by the great political and social transformations which were taking place in their native land.

The tendencies of the latter years of the reign of Ferdinand, which were less absolute in character, the hopes to which the expected alliance of Christine and the constitutional party had given rise, the promises of a better future which seemed to realise around the cradle of the Princess Isabella, filled all hearts with joy. People gave expression to their feelings in every form.

It was in vain that the friends of the past, such as Lista, Hermosilla, Martinez de la Rosa, endeavoured to stem the tide which captivated the imagination of all. Their protests

against what they called a false desire for emancipation or a boundless love of licence were uttered but unheeded. They were lost in theoretical discussions, whilst the verses of the coming poets aroused great enthusiasm. These verses were eagerly welcomed by a people full of hope and joy ; they were repeated in the open air, in cafés and in drawing-rooms. Every political incident became the subject of a literary work. The great modifications of the state of society which were continued during the seven years of the Civil War and the first regency of Espartero afforded constant stimulation to the activity of authors. In Spain, with all her love of tradition, new ideas and new points of view arose ; other men, other types, and other characters appeared. It was thence that authors drew their inspiration in order to express by turns their regrets or aspirations, and especially the latter, which stirred the Spanish people with regard to the sudden and great evolution of their destiny.

A continual ardour inspired the romantic writers of Estramadura and Andalusia. Their life, as may be seen, for example, in the case of the great lyrical poet Espronceda and the satirical pamphleteer José de Larra, was an incessant warfare for the cause of Liberal ideas and moral and intellectual enfranchisement. For it was certainly a characteristic of Spanish Romanticism to have grasped so ardently the passion which then urged the land of Calderon to wrest itself violently from the bonds of an absolute monarchy and religious tyranny. Espronceda, Angel de Saavedra, Duke of Rivas, Quintana, had won European fame before Zorrilla appeared.

Portugal, so different from her neighbour and rival both in origin and temperament—a fact far too little recognised—came more slowly into the possession of her literary powers. The kingdom of Lusitania had as yet hardly recovered from the numerous crises, internal and external, which had been the fate of a State bereft of power and constantly threatened in her interests. The extinction of her physical and moral

forces had been the inevitable consequence. A pale light dawned on this light-hearted and witty people, but they lacked solid ability, and suffered long days of prostration after a few hours of animated inspiration. The poetic faculty was languid in a country where the art of singing or composing verses was a general pastime. Even the eternal eclogues were forgotten. The intellectual horizon seemed blank when Almeida Garrett and his Romantic school appeared. It was evident that, in spite of appearances, the country was still productive.

The early Romantic movement, feeling its way, was marked throughout Europe by a retrogression towards mediæval traditions. An inclination, common to most peoples, to draw their inspiration from their own past in order to renew their strength, was also to be found in Portugal. This was the case, despite the unsettled state of affairs, for Portugal was all the more enamoured of her past glories, seeing no prospect of their return at any time. Garrett understood at a glance what elements were necessary to record permanently the destiny of his race. He belonged by birth to a family from the Azores, his ancestors coming from Ireland in the first instance; thus he had the double qualities which blended in a Portuguese soul the melancholy and idealism of the Breton race with the vehement passion of the South and East. He possessed, above all, a profound historical knowledge of his country. He found in the old legends in verse the expression of the ancient local colour which constitutes the very life of a nation, and this he rendered permanent in works of rare perfection.[1] Garrett's influence was great, not only in the case of his immediate followers, such as the poet and historian Herculano, and of the ultra-Romantics who spoilt the best of their imitations by exaggeration and artificiality, but also in regard to the later followers of the

[1] L. de Carné. See Theophile Braga's important work, *The History of Portuguese Literature.*

schools of the end[1] of the nineteenth century, known as the Symbolists.[2]

§ 9.

Russia was almost the last to awaken to intellectual life. In her turn she evinced such ardour as if, within the space of a few days, she would fill the gap left by a prolonged sleep lasting from the early attempts of the barbaric period to the initial efforts of modern literature, and from the old heroic rhapsodies whence sprang the famous *Song of the Band of Igor*,[3] to the original and fertile production destined to assume the vitality of this harmonious and sonorous language.

The age of Mysticism and Romanticism was the third period of Russian literature.[4] The early years were marked by an outburst of mystic sentimentality. After the Revolu-

[1] In the later years of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth century a genuine renaissance under the direction of Garrett was visible, especially among the dramatists, Julio Brandaô, Julio Danta, Don Joâo de Camara, and others.

[2] Contemporary Portuguese poetry, to which we shall have to revert later, is, as a matter of fact, represented on the one hand by the later sentimental writers of the Romantic School, and on the other by those who sought to free themselves from the scholarship and philosophical sympathies in order to draw their inspiration from nature. To the second of these two conflicting classes belong Joâo de Deos, Theophile Braga, Anthero de Quental, Joâo Penha, Gomes Leal, and the philosopher in verse, Teixeira Bastos.

[3] See the scholarly edition of the *Song of Igor*, by Dr. A. Boltz, in *Hellas*, vol iii. Leiden, 1892.

[4] The intellectual history of Russia may be divided in its four periods of unequal length according to certain leading facts. The first is marked by the introduction of Byzantine Christianity amidst the gloom of barbarism and the almost exclusive preponderance of the religious element; the second by the sudden assimilation of Western ideas and the closer relationship with the rest of Europe; the third is the period of imitation and pseudo-classicism which lasted to the beginning of the nineteenth century, and was followed by the attempts at reform of the Romantic School; the fourth that of the social evolution of to-day under the flag of popular realism.

tion, Catherine was alarmed at the progress of freethought, which had been introduced surreptitiously under cover of Freemasonry, and she endeavoured by reactionary legislation to counteract a tendency which, if it did not menace her authority, would at any rate result in a dangerous emancipation of thought. The character of her second successor, Alexander I., had rendered the attempts at repression useless. The pietism of Novikof, encouraged by the Imperial correspondent of Mme. de Krudener, and shared by the Liberal minister Speransky, became influential. A wave of superstitions had come over the highest circles of society; there was a sort of craze for cloudy metaphysics. "Bible societies, Martinists,[1] Rosicrucians, and Swedenborgians alone were in favour."[2] The rise of Romanticism introduced a new and powerful element, but the religious movement had been of too marked a character to be without result, and many minds were tinged with a certain melancholy, even such great writers as Dostoiewski, Gleb Ouspensky, Tolstoi, Saltgkov, and their recent followers.

The founder of Russian Romanticism was Jonkovski, the leader and master was Pouschkin. The former in his numerous imitations of Schiller, Goethe, Uhland, and Novalis, introduced the new doctrine; the latter, with no lack of talent and assimilation, made that doctrine his own. Jonkovski had already written on German subjects in German style when his disciple, still at college, was only beginning to be conscious of his impressions. Ponschkin was not the dawn but the rising sun, and his rivals, Dalvig, Baratinski, Yazikoff, recognised him as master as soon as he appeared. Just as in spring the fields are covered with flowers, says Voguë, Russia was adorned with poets full of enthusiasm, who surrounded their young master in a brilliant group. The appearance of his first poem, *Rousban and*

[1] Followers of a French visionary who pretended to have communion with spirits.

[2] Melchoir de Voguë, *The Russian Novel*, p. 31.

Ludmila, was almost theatrical owing to its unexpected nature and striking reception.

The cult of Byron, in which Lermontoff, with his powerful and glowing imaginative gifts, was most prominent, suddenly took possession of the young and sceptical authors, especially those eager for passion, harmony, and art.

After a time their fever declined, then lyric outbursts were calmed, and their excitement was subdued. Prose resumed its proper place. Walter Scott dethroned Byron. Pouschkin himself, on arriving at the maturity of his genius, devoted himself to the novel, inspiring a group of writers such as Zagoskine, Dahl, Veltmann, Polevoï, and Martinski, to take up this form of writing. He became more personal, especially in the work in which he revealed to Russia a *terra incognita*, the life under the rule of the Czars—a life more wretched than elsewhere, a life with scant joys but suffering, deprivation, and trials in abundance. In this work he is one of the leaders of modern realism and the first to understand the soul of the people in a land of serfdom.

In Poland three poets of talent, Mickiewicz, Jules Slowacki, and Sigismund Krasinski, though drawing their inspiration from various sources, simultaneously expressed in admirable verse their regret for the departed glory and their sympathy for the sufferings of their fatherland. Moved by their poems Poland rose in 1830, and owing to the remembrance of these stirring hymns the terrible insurrection of 1863 burst forth. Sufficient admiration has never been accorded to *The Pilgrim's Book*, by Mickiewicz, a terrible account of the Polish exiles, or to the splendid poem by Conrad Wallenrod, in which patriotism is extolled almost to madness, and hatred of tyranny becomes a paroxysm ; or, again, the strange drama *The Ancestors* (Dziady), which claims supernatural inspiration.

§ 10.

The Scandinavian peoples were not untouched by this great intellectual revival.

It was not a mere echo of a distant storm, but a genuine and heated contest, which was carried on in Sweden between the present and the past for the right to guide the future. A conflict between French and German taste was waged until Geüer (founder of the *Iduna*), Tegner, and Lyng wrested their country, formerly under French influence, from the recently powerful domination of Goethe and Klopstock in order that national traditions might serve as models. Œhlenschlæger, a famous Danish writer, called by his contemporaries "the prince of Scandinavian poets," endeavoured to revive the brilliant colours and great originality of the ancient poems, the *Eddas*. "The Danes," says C. Hauch, "were like those who had drunk an enchanted potion and had forgotten the songs of their youth. Œhlenschlæger broke the spell, and restored again the old Scandinavian heroes." But his work did not cease there. He was also desirous of giving expression to such feelings as do not change with time, and studied profoundly the joys and sorrows of his inmost being—a subject which always affords endless lyrical inspiration. A number of imitators were not lacking who were stirred by that innate Scandinavian love of the fantastic, of reverie, and, we might add, the vagueness, of metaphysics. Poetry and philosophy occupied an equal place of importance.[1]

During the period between the death of Byron and that of Goethe, all the spontaneous and individual characteristics of the Norwegian people were evolved. A generation had grown up since the never-to-be-forgotten years 1811 and 1814, which gave Norway her political liberty and her autonomy.[2] Long forgotten amidst snow and ice this

[1] Hegel was held in high honour at Copenhagen, although he found a powerful adversary in Kjerkegaard, who with Grundtwig had done much to arouse the controversial spirit among a people as yet firm in their faith.

[2] See *Norway*, the official work published under the direction of Sten Konow and Karl Fischer, at Christiania (1900, 1 vol. in 4to), on the occasion of the Great Exhibition in Paris.

northern land showed a desire to assume a position among the other nations of Europe.[1] Up till then Norway possessed neither historians, scholars, nor dramatists. Her literary patrimony consisted solely of *Sagas* of the bygone days when her fierce warriors were wont to cross the sea and terrorise Europe, carrying off as far as Trondjhem the spoil of Latin and German peoples. The despotic discipline of Puritanism, the hard conditions of an existence as severe and as dismal as the climate, the perpetual melancholy of native features, grandiose in many respects, but in others confined within narrow horizons, had, among other things, acted as bars to the intellectual advance of this small people capable, indeed, of profound emotion and great passions. Another check was to be found in the repression due to a long political dependence, which allied the lot of Norway, as those of a subordinate province, with the destinies of Denmark and Sweden. Finally, under the double influence of Johann Sebastien Welhaven, a native of Bergen, and a romantic poet like Tennyson, endowed with classical perfection, and of Henrick Wergeland, the Norwegian muse was roused to life. It was of too vigorous and intrepid a character to be influenced by the Byronic melancholy, too exuberant to rise and hover in a cloudless sky amidst the Olympian serenity of the great German pantheist. Powerful lyrical emotion, the natural outlet of heart and soul, gave it wings. Numerous beautiful passages fill the works of the talented Wergeland, whose will and personality have somewhat eclipsed the rest of Norwegian literature.

[1] "The old Norwegian lion, as harmless as a poodle, had for many years eaten his biscuit and wagged his tail" (Welhaven, *The Rise of Norway*).

CHAPTER XIX

Romanticism exhausted all the resources of imagination and fancy—Reaction towards reality—Other conditions of social and political life and of the moral code—The Second Empire—Realism in literature—The various forms it assumed in Europe—Naturalism in France ; its imitation in other countries—New schools are founded.

§ 1.

THE sentimental character of the Romantic Movement had spread like wildfire throughout Europe.

Nevertheless the pure love of beauty, the fever of sentiment and fire of eloquence, the excessive restlessness which were amongst its characteristics had little in common with an age which became increasingly positive and scientific.

By unmistakable signs modern social tendencies made themselves felt in literary work, with their good or evil, their better or worse sides. People were increasingly impatient to study in their true light, and to scrutinise minutely the instinctive passions, the appetites and motive forces, noble or otherwise, by which man is actuated.

The French Romantic writers, led by such men as Victor Hugo, and the author of *Henri III.*, succeeded in breaking free from narrow formulæ, thus widening the horizon and permitting liberty in poetic form. To them is due the honour of liberating literature and thought, but in the exultation of the triumph they did escape that momentary loss of consciousness which is the lot of most conquerors.

Having far exceeded the original plans they had laid

down for themselves in proportion as their talent developed, they saw no difficulty in proclaiming for every one the right of absolute independence and untrammelled fancy. Their ambitious desire was confined to no special period, and all subjects under all aspects afforded them inspiration. They claimed the right to deal with and meditate upon every topic unimpeded by rules and traditions.

As they themselves declared : "We want to give full rein to our strength and liberty, our dreams and poetry, we will only listen to the voice that sounds within us ; we belong to no century and to no school. Art possesses no features in common with the mass of mankind, nor with philosophy, politics, or morals. Art is art, and nothing else."

But by dint of constant use the wings of the imagination may grow weary, as do those of a bird, and the frequent flights into visionary realms produce a powerlessness of comprehension in regard to earth, its inhabitants, and the needs of every-day life. The fact became clear to all. Critics protested against the abuse of the most beautiful, if the most dangerous, faculty of the mind—the imagination. The public grew weary of the products of unbridled imagination, and demanded less illusory representations of life.

The reaction towards reality was not lacking in the works of those authors themselves during the period 1820–30. For when, owing to the daily increasing importance of the middle classes, money became the *ultima ratio mundi*, the uncertain rewards of glory appeared insufficient. In the hands of such fertile writers as Alexandre Dumas and Eugène Sue, literary work grew to be a veritable business. Money tended to become the be-all and end-all of literature as it had already become the god of society.

Ideas thus lost their frankness and spontaneity. Poetry which but recently had been characterised by an intensity of self-revelation, now became cold and stilted. The tragedy of life and grave notions concerning human destiny

degenerated into mere farces. Both the progress of journalism which caused the fluctuation of ideas, just as it produced the fluctuation of the Exchange, and the development of a new feature in literature, the novel in "feuilleton" form, inferior in substance and nearly always indifferent in execution, did not make for literary progress of a high stamp.

The constant sacrifice, more and more palpable, of true art to the mere monetary considerations of a trade, prognosticated the speedy approach of a period when all forms of art, contaminated by social influences, would aspire no higher than to pander to the over-stimulated senses or lull to sleep those whose characters were lacking in stamina and backbone. In such a period authors, generally speaking, had no loftier ambition than to obtain for themselves a large share of social pleasures, and to gain, above all, money and a name.[1]

Too great a number of authors were thus influenced, whence resulted such meagre products as mark the later years of Louis Philippe's reign in the early years of the Second Empire.

§ 2.

However, despite the growth of this mercantile element, literature was far from dead. Indeed we may say that all the best literary achievement of the century appears to have culminated in a period seemingly solely given over to material considerations. This is the case with the France of Louis Philippe's day.

Chateaubriand, in his declining years, dictates his *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, and Lammenais, now aged, directs his *Paroles d'un Croyant* against Rome ; Bérenger, in a quivering voice, utters his last refrains ; Lamartine, in his serene belief in Christianity, meditates, and then, when his dreams have faded, pours forth his *Harmonies ;* Victor Hugo, according to

[1] Cf. Frédéric Loliée : *Nos Gens de Lettres*, 1889, 1 vol. in 18vo.

the inspiration of the moment, scatters his melancholy *Feuilles d'automne;* they seem to point to a brief moment of rest and meditation in his tempestuous career. Michelet evokes once more the past, and introduces passion and warlike enthusiasm and life into history, whilst less lyrical or perhaps, more correctly, less romantic writers like Guizot, Thiers, and Tocqueville, counterbalance his brilliant and perhaps dangerous influence in favour of historical accuracy. Théophile Gautier continues with his calm and measured mode of procedure to exercise his brilliant talents as a "modeller" of poetry; George Sand adopts the chimeric ideas of Saint-Simon, which her art was instrumental in reviving, in her pastoral romances and love-stories. Balzac, that most prodigious writer, begins with feverish hand his *Comédie Humaine*, and etches with ineffaceable strokes the features of modern society. Dumas produces a host of novels and plays, instinctively producing on the stage, even when his imagination distorts the truth, a work similar to that of Stendhal, Balzac, and Flaubert in the novel, of St. Beewe, and Taine in criticism, of Augustin Thierry, Fustel de Coulanges and Michelet in his song, in fact he introduced experimental psychology. In short, apart from literature, philosophy and history, every branch of learning revealed the solution of secrets regarding nature and life.

Despite the notable diminution of lofty sources of inspiration the period of the monarchy of Jules was one of the most propitious intellectually in France, and if of little renown for political progress, is remarkable for the abundant variety of literary effort.

§ 3

Nevertheless, and for the reasons we have just given, idealism or the ardour of the lyrical enthusiasm declined.

Balzac, the greatest of the earlier novelists, revealed the approach of a new era. It was clear that the tone of writings

must inevitably change, and more and more closely approach reality in respect of men and things, and even of Nature itself, which Romantic had abandoned with scorn.

However, in France, owing to the unsettled state of affairs in Europe, there was a final revival of Romanticism, but of a social, humanitarian, and political character. This phenomenon dates from 1848–1852. It was a time when political ideas took pre-eminence; there was no public for treatises on social questions; Parliamentary action, or the news cried in the streets absorbed the entire attention. The theatres were closed and the book-trade languished. As if in compensation for this a splendid career seemed to offer for those who were gifted with eloquence. Words had a strange virtue then, and a credulous fever animated both those who hurled them from the platform into the heart of the crowd and those who listened to them eagerly. The people believed in the devotion of the representatives, in the solidarity of conscience and universal brotherhood. Genuine enthusiasm killed the imagination in favour of events which were now accomplished facts—the overthrow of a throne, the destruction of an oligarchy lacking in greatness, the institution of universal suffrage, and the proclamation owing to the Republic of the rights of the citizen. The words which rang forth from the lips of Lamartine charmed and inspired the multitude by turns. He needed no other means than sentiment and emotion to convey the lasting impressions of his powerful eloquence.

Lyrical poetry is again to be found in the works of Ledru-Rollin, Michel de Bourges, and Madier de Montjau. The art of depicting vividly the realities of the present, their dreams or the Utopia of the future, impassioned them no less than the topics of their speeches. They are one and all familiar with that tendency towards pompousness, exaggeration, and the piling-up of epithets.

The days of the Second Empire were not of long duration, but none the less full of action and public expression of

opinion. The keen desire for a political reconstitution excited as much enthusiasm as excess of sensibility and ardent love poetry had created at the Restoration. Similarly in the eighteenth century, the genuine love of right, the dream of an equal partition of property, the purely speculative and philosophical tendencies succeeded in unhinging many minds.[1]

Roused by so many new ideas, both orators and journalists, rulers and ruled, were incapable of keeping their social theories free from adopting the form and the tone of excessive sentimentality. But the march of history was by no means impeded by these fierce tirades.

Amidst so much fruitless agitation Louis Napoleon let himself be induced by the illusions of the people, and, on the faith of false promises, to become President of the Republic, which was but a step removed from the declaration of the Empire. He seized the reins of government with a firm resolution not to let them go until they were taken from him by sheer force. The country settled down to a period of calm prosperity, and at least the appearances of a well-regulated organisation. The revival of trade furnished satisfactory proof of material prosperity ; it was the heyday of credit and the zenith of speculation, those the happy days of Péreire, Haussmann, Morny, Mirès. The tone of literature conformed to the tendencies of the new *régime*, curried favour with the Emperor, and took so prominent a part in the plans for rendering his position secure, that the nation, with its attention continuously distracted from meditation on sorrowful regrets or fierce vengeance, lost consciousness of her identity amidst pleasures and frivolities. Venus and Plutus were triumphant. The theatres had never been so successful, and light literature

[1] It was the period of the prevalence of the ideas of Fourrier concerning communities and the humanitarian theories of Pierre Leroux, the Jerome Cardan of the nineteenth century, the schemes for levelling everything, proposed by Cabet, who carried to excess the communistic ideas of Mably, Morelly, Condorcet, Babeuf, Sylvain Maréchal, and the projects of their great opponent Proudhon.

flourished exceedingly in rare abundance. It is remarkable that poetry subjected to these influences did not remain a mere disinterested manifestation of the woes of the soul, a pure flight of fancy in realms of imagination. The consideration of current events led writers to subjects of a more practical character, and they were content merely to amuse.

Without doubt fine art was ripe for further development under the inspiration of vigorous and noble minds which were not wanting at this period, but owing to the constant prevalence of the taste of a materialist age authors were forced to descend to the level of their contemporaries in order to be comprehensible. Soldiers of fortune and political adventurers, the rich in search of pleasure, whose sole interest lay in the rise or fall of their income or the best way of spending their money, fashionable women and mercenary journalists struck the note in society and directed public taste. It was inevitable that literature should reflect such a state of society, just as a pond reflects the plants on its banks.[1]

This state of things was first attacked by irony. The merriment caused by the operetta and the delicate parodies of Meilhac and Halévy, which held up to ridicule all the old ideas, together with the rhythmical refrains of the talented and light-hearted Offenbach, spread the truth far and wide under a veil of delicate mockery. On the stage, again the society plays of Emile Augier and Theodore Barrière, and the causes pleaded by Alexandre Dumas *fils* under the form of dialogue, boldly brought before the audience of the theatre questions of private morality and prepared the way for the Naturalistic School.

Human beings and their surroundings as subjects of fiction having been reduced to normal and human proportions, novelists no longer hesitate to present characters and conditions drawn from life and by actual observation.

[1] See in the *Revue Politique et Littéraire* of July 26, and August 2, 1873, the article by the German critic Kreyssig, on this development of French literary talent.

In order to describe the author must observe, and in order to observe, and to observe accurately and precisely, he must abstract his personality, must regard his material objectively, widening and enlarging his field of observation, and consequently treat his work in an entirely different manner than formerly.

Art aimed at being the true reflection of society. Victor Hugo, himself, in a letter publicly addressed to the realistic writer [1] Champfleury some years before the publication of the *Misérables*, wrote the following words :—

"The literature of the nineteenth century will only have one epithet ; it will bear the name of democratic literature."

Through the efforts of Emile Augier and Dumas *fils*, as we have just said, drama and comedy were created by direct observation and without slight variation continued on the same lines. The attempt was regarded as feeble and inefficacious.

The novel, on the other hand, gave promise of being the most searching inquiry into social questions and developed with remarkable rapidity. Almost immediately realism spread throughout Europe. In France it presented a violent and pathological type ; in Spain a thoroughly local character, and gave clear proof of its native soil ; while English, American, Slav, and Scandinavian authors blend noble ideals with portrayal of the real.

§ 4.

The transition from vague idealities to the close scrutiny of actual life in moral or immoral aspects, from the study of manner to the study of society itself, was of necessity rapidly accomplished owing to the march of events, and was almost simultaneous in all European literatures.

In 1850 we see a simple book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, from

[1] At the end of the eighteenth century Restif de la Bretonne spoke already of the contemporary "realists," but it was not till 1848 that, according to Champfleury the word "realism" finally found a place in the dictionary.

the pen of an American authoress, Harriet Beecher Stowe, a work prompted by Christian philanthropy, inspire both the Old World and the New to put down slavery. It was only necessary for her to appeal to the feelings by the portrayal of the painful facts revealed in her book, coloured by hope, and warmed by imagination, in order to produce a general heart-stirring, a sort of "social remorse," as Sidney Webb would have called it. About the same time the original works of Dickens began to appear in England. From 1838 onwards he made a profound study of social questions and the psychology of a great nation.

The Russian novel had not as yet revealed its humanitarian tendencies. The personification of the actual society in place of a conventional society was as yet but foreshadowed in the works of George Sand and Pierre Leroux ; to England is due the initial movement in social literature.

Between 1830 and 1860 a great economic crisis prevailed which resulted in the overthrow of the former hierarchy and the intensified antagonism among the various classes of society. Industrial development from which sprang the financial influence of the middle classes was counterbalanced by the extreme poverty of the working classes. Parliamentary inquiries into the question revealed a grave state of affairs and crying wrongs. The popular works of Dickens are the literary embodiment of the attempts to ameliorate social conditions, and the contemporaneous with the Chartist Rising and the strikes of 1842, of which Disraeli, the leader of budding Toryism, and one of the founders of feudal socialism, has traced so striking a picture with astonishing sang-froid. The author of *Oliver Twist* and *Pickwick* is full of the rancour of the proletariat for the egoism of the wealthy aristocracy and for the lack of sympathy and hard-heartedness of the well-to-do middle class, had, under the cloak of fiction, sketched the outlines of a new social philosophy.[1]

[1] The works of Charles Kingsley, with their remarkable style, were one result of this outburst of sensibility. He was one of the leaders of

Among contemporary writers we find Charlotte Brontë, one of the three noble-minded daughters of a poor clergyman of the Yorkshire moors, gifted with spontaneity and talent, her sisters, Anne and Emily, endowed with deep feeling; Elizabeth Gaskell, with somewhat stern and deeply religious nature, and her love of moral teaching; and, finally, the noteworthy George Eliot, so far superior to George Sand, owing to the faithful portrayal of her characters. One and all set forth in relief and in a touching fashion the sorrows of life of society in general and of factory life in particular, as, for example, enforced idleness and strikes, the overworking of children, and the degradation of women, the jealousy and hatred of mankind for his fellows, and all the hardships of the manufacturing population in great cities. In the writings of George Eliot, all means, such as description, anecdote, or dialogue, were employed to depict human actions, and for the study of the conscience without the minutiæ of psychological observation ever diminishing or detracting from the realistic vigour of the picture.

For some time—a period never to be forgotten [1]—there was an evidence of astonishing vitality in Romantic literature, indeed it might be said of every branch of literature, for by a strange coincidence the literary talent of Alfred Tennyson, "the most classical of English romantic writers," [2]—a talent cultivated and maintained at a high level for a considerable period—reached its zenith about the year 1842, and Elizabeth and Robert Browning attained between 1844 and 1846 the

Christian socialism, and author of the revolutionary and idealistic *Alton Locke*.

[1] The remark is especially applicable to the years 1847–50. After the fruitful years of 1818–1822 there had been up till no period so rich in literary works.

[2] Tennyson, endowed with the sense of proportion as well as poetic imagination, with unfettered energy yet a certain self-control, succeeded in clothing his elegiacs in almost Virgilian form. No poet has excelled Tennyson in purity of style, nobleness of thought, or gracefulness of expression. On the other hand, he lacked creative force, and was rather gifted with the desire for perfection than with power.

reputation at which they aimed, the one since 1829, when still Elizabeth Barrett, the other since 1833; further, the main part of Carlyle's work belongs to the period about 1845. It was then that the "solvent Carlyle, essayist, lecturer, critic, and stripper-off of social raiment," became the great adept in the "painting of heroisms." [1]

Carlyle, with his prodigious mental gifts, occupied himself with two widely opposed branches of study from pure mathematics to the wildest flights of fancy. He was primarily a historian and philosopher. He continually lays stress in his works on his famous theory of individualism embracing all humanity within its bosom.

The pupil of Germany, translator of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, author of the *Life of Schiller*, and enthusiastic follower of Fichte, his mind was impregnated with Germanisms. By bringing before the notice of his compatriots one of the sources of their language and thought he enriched both, and was largely contributory in freeing English literature from the puerilities which were introduced at the time of Walpole, owing to the warmth of esteem felt by the whole of Europe for the eighteenth century in French literature.

No quainter or more untranslatable writer than Carlyle was ever known. The unexpected ideas to which he gives expression, the strange language which he wilfully adopts, his tumultuous style, abrupt, spasmodic, bristling with metaphors and exaggerated and distorted epithets, the judgments pronounced against England by this eccentric Englishman, the incoherence of his philosophy which was a sort of cloudy pantheism, and the no less striking contrast of the determined brusqueness with his almost morbid depth of feeling disconcert the reader at every moment while exciting his interest to the highest degree.

Returning to Dickens we find that the novel, despite his prolific writing of such works, did not cease to be in his

[1] Edmund Gosse: *Modern English Literature.*

hands a wonderful instrument of experimental analysis. His influence was as far-reaching and profound as that of any writer, not only within the limits of his native land, but also in France,[1] the United States, and elsewhere. Every one was unanimous in admiring the skilful drawing of his characters, the subtlety of his psychological studies, the life-like character of his portraits, and so many touches quite characteristic of himself of which he made every possible use. Dickens, with his talent by turns indicative of sentiment and of caricature, appeared to scatter his gifts far and wide. He is sometimes considered long-winded, but is never dull. The unexpected proceeds from his pen, mingled with the most remarkable and humorous, not to say bold, sketches of life.

It is a characteristic gift of English writers to combine in high relief the knowledge of exact detail and genuine feeling. We find the same profound knowledge of nature and life in Thackeray, who etched his figures with such powerful and careful outlines that they remain ineffaceable; and again in Anthony Trollope, who was superior to Thackeray in the extent of his psychological studies, and almost equal to Balzac in his knowledge or general intuition of the human race. These masters of novel-writing differ from one another in character and personality, but are at one in possession of that faculty so eminently English, namely, the perfect knowledge of detail and the appreciation of reality.

[1] We may mention, in passing, the novelists Frederick Marryat and Charles Lever, who followed Dickens. At the time of his greatest popularity, about 1855, the intellectual influence of England was very noticeable in France, especially as regards the criticism and translation of many works. Emile Montégut, Philarete Chasles, and Taine published the results of the researches. The works of George Eliot likewise called for attention, and simultaneously Clemence Rogers' translation made Darwin's *Origin of the Species* known in France, the moral and scientific influence of which, though open to varied opinion, did not fail to affect the thought of the nineteenth century to a profound degree.

§ 5.

The same quality of painstaking detail combined with actual fact is also a distinguishing feature in the pictures which the most modern writers of Slav literature have given us. Their action and influence mark one of the greatest periods of intellectual progress in the nineteenth century.

Romanticism had accomplished at least something of value in preparing the way for the future and proclaiming the author's right to his personal opinions. Gogol, who drew many fine characters, produced his early tales at about the time when Lermontoff was writing his last verses. He gave evidence of shades of thought and canons of art hitherto unknown in Russia, while Bielinski was formulating the rules of modern criticism and declaring art to be the faithful copy of life. Literature began to descend from the heights in order to represent reality, losing more and more its personal and aristocratic character, and becoming popular, social, independent, and national. The political greed of the Czar Nicholas, the conqueror and legislator of a bygone age, a living anachronism who personified all the menacing and powerful characteristics of the aristocracy, acted as a serious check to this purely indigenous movement. What his imperial schemes were we do not know. Perhaps a civilisation of an antiquated character less European than Asiatic, and which was to be developed solely from within. His political dreams vanished when the walls of Sebastopol fell. He saw the sword with which he hoped to repress the invasion of the democratic notions of the West shattered in his hands. But under his iron rule Slav genius repressed within its native land, forced to the consideration of the troubles which emanated from widespread serfdom, and perturbed at the grim prospect of its own destiny, was nevertheless silently preparing for a speedy and great development. The application of the progressive and wise measures of Speransky under Alexander II., the emancipation of the peasants, the

reforms of 1861 which liberated twenty million people, whilst founding another society, also created new needs, customs, feelings, and manners. The ideas long before proclaimed by Bielinski were about to be realised. The time was at hand when education was to become widespread, and the intellectual physiognomy of the nation to become defined, when artists and authors were to give to all their work the distinctive Russian stamp. For the first time Muscovite literature, instead of being the silent reflection of the progress of Latin and Teutonic peoples, now became to a great extent their leader, and after the example of several eminent writers, adopted the literary form which seemed best to tally with the social condition of modern Europe, namely, realism. The programme of the so-called "Naturalistic School" has been drawn up in advance. Its object was the study of the people demanded by the necessity for original detail, by the prevalence of Hegel's ideas at the universities, by the moral needs of the time, by the echo of socialistic agitations, and the evolution of the national idea. Henceforth the humble circle of Slav writers became widened and authoritative, enlightened and guided by its gifted leaders, Tourgenieff, Gontcharoff, Pisemski, Herzen, Dostoiewski, the Nihilist poet Nekrassoff, and the world-renowned Tolstoi. Some of them set themselves to demonstrate the powerlessness of the generation brought up under influence of the ideas of 1840 in the light of moral and social changes; others aimed the last blows at decaying society, painting in bold colours its vices, faults, and the cause of its weakness; others, again, poured out the wealth of their imagination and observation simply in the description of the never-ending troubles of the life of the people. A new and deep feeling, strong and intense, was aroused in Europe, and was soon spread far and wide by translations and criticism.

Even in the North, the chilly regions of Norway, we find writers appeared who were, despite exaggerated or para-

doxical views, to present the most complete studies of modern life. The first of these were Ibsen and Björnsen.[1] The former is gloomy and sceptical, seeking to find in the darkness of doubt a new guide for the conscience which should lead to nobler conceptions of man and society. The latter is optimistic, less original, less revolutionary, and more true to life, endeavouring to establish a link between the powerless mysticism and science, as well as between the irresistible attraction of the supernatural for some minds, and the positive application of contemporary theories.

§ 6.

In France, we have just said, Balzac had given an enormous impetus to works embodying the study of man and society. No succeeding novelist could fail to imitate him whether as contemporary or follower, or to a greater or less extent to be influenced by him.

As is frequently the case, the copy goes beyond the model. Under pretext of extending the benefits of such imitation in all directions, and of taking as objects of close study whatever moves, thinks, feels, grows, or crawls in the varied stages of life, authors were all too easily led to carry matters to excess.

The year 1857 saw the appearance of the impersonal novel, the famous *Madame Bovary*, which described and analysed with startling realism. A few months later Ernest Feydeau, with his strange conception of morbid psychology, hurled another blow at the idealist novel of George Sand, who continued to write, and at the delightful illusory work of Octave Feuillet.

After Flaubert came the brothers de Goncourt, with their extravagant descriptions; but theirs was not the gentle

[1] Two other great Norwegians call for mention, namely, Jonas Lie and Vette Vjinsli, who were fellow-students of Ibsen and Björnsen at the University.

realism of Champfleury, still less the delicate irony of Charles de Bernard. To paint human life other subjects and other colours were necessary. The author of *Thérèse Raquin* and *l'Assomoir* followed the same lines as the de Goncourts, who were enamoured to excess of all that was modern ; he showed himself with all his prejudice and his natural moroseness. Positive ideas became more and more firmly rooted in the minds of authors ; the one and only question for the generation succeeding the war of 1870, was industrial prosperity and morality based on reason. Emile Zola appeared in France as the founder of a new form of literature which was known as *Naturalism*, at a time when in England the two Brownings were giving to the world their beautiful poetry, which purified and idealised all that was best and noblest in the first half of the nineteenth century, namely, great faith in the future of the human race, liberal ideas and a great love of nature. Zola declared himself head of the Naturalistic School, and to support his theory multiplied his examples, principles, and codes. In his calm faith in the force of Nature he applied his exceptional gifts and strength to the representation of the powerful factors which move man as a social being, and the effects of unrestrained passion, as if they were pathological phenomena studied in the operating theatre of the novelist.

§ 7.

This movement was the indirect result of a great philosophic influence which was simultaneously felt on all sides in regard to matters intellectual. In 1829 one of the greatest thinkers, Charles Darwin, had exposed his famous *Origin of the Species* to heated criticism. In England, Germany, and France, Darwin's work, owing to its great renown, substituted biological for mathematical science as the criterion of science. The fundamental idea of his system—that of life emanating from natural selection—had been of widespread

effect beyond the limits of anthropology. Both art and literature were influenced by it, and a general curiosity was aroused to inquire into and explain the problems of life, both individual and social. Reason and experience claimed in turn the place of sentiment. There were no more ideal hypotheses or fantastic figments admissible. The novel was an outcome of the scientific evolution of the age, and consequently was bound to base its *raison d'être* and its moral worth on its character as a source of scientific study, and further to continue and complete physiological knowledge, substituting the natural man subject to physical and chemical laws for the abstract and metaphysical man hitherto studied. In short, the novel was destined to be the type of the literature of this scientific age, just as classical literature corresponded to an age of scholasticism and theology. And so it proved to be. The idea was carried as far as possible. The experimental novel became well known.

The result was an increase and development of the "medical novel," of which a prodigious number of nervous illnesses formed the basis. The study of the feelings as applied to the history of manners and the minute examination of the conditions of physical health and their influence on the moral well-being, formed an admirable pretext for omitting no single detail of the aberrations to which such a considerable portion of poor humanity is liable.

Little was then known of that other class of realism of which Dostoiewski and Tolstoi furnished such masterpieces, and realism in which the description of an event is closely followed by the judgment to which it gives rise, and the reader has the right to draw a lesson or a moral. People only had regard for externals and paid more attention to things than human beings, their eyes were closed to all but the immediate reality. And how little reality there was in the works of the de Goncourts, of Zola and Guy de Maupassant himself, and their imitators at home and abroad, Parisians or Belgians, Germans or Scandinavians, before the latter sepa-

rated from them and Alphonse Daudet[1] also, and ridiculed the psychology of passion.[2]

French influence was, indeed, not wanting in the temporary movement which drew Germany into Naturalism as regards philosophy, drama, fiction, and poetry. We shall not go into detail as to the imitations of certain young authors, natives of the land of Schopenhauer and Nietsche, such as Karl Bleibtren, Bahr,[3] and Heiz Tovote. Hauptmann in his earlier works counted himself among the "moderns," but he revealed at least his capacity for seeing the real and his powers of giving it expression. During this time in England the fertile pen of Anthony Trollope, whose best days were now past, still formed a link between the exact and clearly-defined realism of his predecessors, and the more vigorous and less restricted realism of Charles Reade.

We shall only touch lightly on the intellectual epidemic known in Italy as "*Verism*," which by a strange contradiction of nature and fashion spread systematic pessimism and morbid erotic sentiment[4] among a people full of life and love.

The literatures of the North had developed too rapidly, and were seemingly prepared to offer flower and fruit simultaneously; they could not escape the temptation of embarking on the novel and experimental drama.

In Denmark, especially under the influence of the Positivist critic, George Brandes, the follower of Taine and Stuart Mill, a fierce attack was made for some years against Romanticism and its last exponents. In the land where

[1] The author of *Sapho* no less inquisitive in nature was capable in this work of combining picturesque realism with much feeling and spirit.

[2] Guy de Maupassant, the veritable historian of sentiment in his calm pessimism had no dearer aim than to reveal to mankind the profound deception of love in modern society.

[3] Cf. Max Nordau: *Degeneration*, vol. ii., Realism; Betteheim, *Deutschen und Franzosen*. Vienna, 1895.

[4] Compare also the passing influence of the too conscientious lucubrations of the novelists and of the Naturalistic School, such as Abel Bottelho on Portuguese literature.

Hans Andersen had but recently indulged in his delicate fancies Jacobsen delighted his compatriots of Copenhagen with *Marie Grubbe*, another Madame Bovary. Next Holger, Drachman, Peder Nansen, and the Swede Strindberg carried the methods of the Naturalistic School to excess, to the astonishment of their contemporaries, in a work of an extraordinarily cynical character : *The Maidservant's Son.*

The attempt did not last long, and the field was limited. The Scandinavians soon abandoned realism for the presentation of local colours so full of mystery or for the expression of undying sentiment. Little by little, under the influence of England and Germany, recently of greater weight, the notion of the artistic value of the study of private life grew and increased in importance, penetrating the psychological novel of every land.

CHAPTER XX

Great division among literary groups — Neo-Hellenism in France and elsewhere — Neo-Christianity and mystical parodies — The Symbolists—The cosmopolitan character of literature in general—Its most recent expression in France, England, the United States, Spain, and Italy—New centres of culture—Dawn of the twentieth century.

§ 1.

In France, even under the double influence of pessimism and criticism, we find a note of determined Romanticism, tyrannical and out of date, characterised by great disparity of method and style, a sentimental formula, varied and polished to excess, mingled with artificiality and affectation, yet searching and critical, ready to gauge the most recent bent of mind. In such a frame wrote Paul Bourget, the great novelist of passion, of elegant dilettantism and voluptuous worldliness, presented ideas which emanated directly from Taine, Renan, or the English psychologists.

Zolaism, with the superficial coarseness and insufficient presentation of its characters, only retained its importance and attracted public attention by the productive energy of its leader. His novels appeared year by year like so many sociological contributions to the history of contemporary manners,[1] or at any rate the incontestable power of the

[1] Zola was forced towards the end of his career to modify his tendencies considerably, and after revealing himself as the author, lacking in illusions, of *La Terre* and *L'Assomoir*, we find him indulging in socialistic dreams in his *Travail* (1901).

writer and his gloomy inspiration made them pass for such with all the romantic colouring of his pictures and despite many hasty generalisations.

These "slices of life," as they were called about the year 1882, full of detail and exclusively devoted by preference to the objective study of the lower grades of society and the common events of daily life, were neither varied nor palatable enough to satisfy every one's taste.

For many years, indeed, a small but powerful minority had sought intellectual nourishment from other sources.

This minority sought in Stendhal, the author of *La Chartreuse de Parme*, a writer not understood by his contemporaries, the minute detail and delicate shades of a psychological imagination combined with action and will-power; or in his follower Merimée, model of that ideal simplicity which is the most consummate effort of art; or, again, in Bandelain, the sombre poetry of a tormented soul or the taste for the unusual. Men looked to Taine for the true theory of heredity and environment, parodied by the Naturalistic School; to Renan for science wedded to imagination, for searching analysis of the human soul, and dazzling wealth of ideas, incomparable suppleness of mind and style; to Paul de Saint Victor for brilliance and picturesqueness of phraseology; to Barbey, of Aurévilly, for romantic flight of imagination and elegant dilettantism; to the English Pre-Raphaelites,[1] whether poets or painters, for the subtle expression of pure beauty; or to Wagner, whose influence began to spread throughout Europe, for the complex impression of the interdependence of all branches of art.

[1] The Pre-Raphaelites Rosetti, Holman Hunt, Burne Jones, Watts, William Morris, and Walter Crane, as well as the poets Swinburne, Tennyson, and Browning, followed the traditions of the Lake School, of Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats. By their lofty character, the nobility of their convictions, their love of legend and allegory, they created an art directly opposed to that of the Realists. (G. Manclair, *Symbolism in France;* Edward Rod, *Studies of the Nineteenth Century.*)

On the other hand, the excesses of recent writings which were an all too faithful copy of life, to which was added the influence of realists and impressionists[1] in art, provoked further both in France and elsewhere a very marked reaction in favour of the past. With the result that, while we find a whole circle of authors, novelists, and playwrights, eager to reproduce with startling realism such life as is presented around them, there exists a curious opposition in the form of a general revival of Greek and Latin fables.

Quite early in the nineteenth century Leigh Hunt and Keats had considered mythology from a serious point of view. In Germany, too, there was a succession of pagan authors from Wieland to Hölderlin, including Heinse, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, and many others.

The antique once again won favour,[2] whether under the form of bronze or marble, whether by the aid of pencil or pen. Not to mention earnest students who endeavoured to reconstruct piece by piece the history of works of art, of existing institutions or of forms of language, three groups of "artists" assisted in this restoration. They constituted the last disciples of the Homeric and Sophoclean school; mere admirers of mythology, and eager followers of Neo-paganism.

Some, through natural inclination, well-balanced enthusiasm, through education or a general desire to develop and enlarge their minds in strength, wisdom, and high ideals, by preference devoted themselves to the study of the master-

[1] Monet's paintings and Zola's writings were the result of the same conception of life. Further, the impressionists whose first care was, as in the case of Charles Monet, to reproduce atmosphere and colour exactly, endeavoured and very often succeeded to introduce into the academic code the representation of scenes and popular types, drawn from life with all the truthfulness of attitude and gesture.

[2] After the *Venus* of Cabanel and the *Nymph* of Baudry, which under the Second Empire marked the reappearance of the nude in painting after a long proscription, goddesses were once more seen in great numbers in picture galleries, unveiling their beauty before a critical public like the shepherd fairs on Mount Ida.

pieces of profane literature ; for they recognised therein the ideal of beauty and harmony.

Others, either because they were disgusted with the vulgarity of their day or through caprice or fancy, resorted to those immortal fictions,[1] in the hope of reviving the insipidity and too frequent unskilful imitation of which seemed to have consigned to oblivion for ever. The imagination and the eye were wearied and sated with pictures too closely resembling the ugly aspect of humanity. Authors sought to forget it amidst the beautiful allegories of Greece, and returned to time-honoured models. Working and chiselling the form with such care that it might become, as it were, in their hands a splendid cup into which to pour ideas, they elaborated the plastic strophes in order that they might receive the wine of their heart. They continued, in short, the great poetry of tradition, and presented one by one the voluptuous allegories of Greece in a new dress. They revived within the depths of their hearts, as in a secret temple, the cult of external and palpable beauty, or sang graceful odes in honour of Venus on the lyre of Anacreon. After a time they were influenced by higher aspirations, with the result that the master of the school of Parnassus,[2] Leconte de Lisle, re-created the religious poetry of Pindar under a brilliant form.

The third group were by no means content with being pagans from an artistic point of view only, but claimed to be whole-heartedly pagan—pagan in sentiment as well as in imagination, in philosophical reasoning as well as in literary

[1] The progress of the new science of myths elaborated by Adalbert Kühn and Max Müller greatly favoured this tendency.

[2] Under the common epithet of Parnassians, jestingly applied to them by Barbey d'Aurévilly, were grouped about 1860 a number of poets differing widely among themselves in nature and mind, but united by the sincere love of art and of beauty in form. These were Leconte de Lisle, Sully-Prudhomme, André Lefèvre, Auguste Lacaussade, Soulary, Charles Coran, Catulle Mendès, Léon Dierx, George Lafenestre, Léon Valade, Albert Mérat, André Lemoyne, André Theuriet, Xavier de Ricard, Albert Glatigny, and Emmanuel des Essarts.

taste. They drew up a series of rules and taught them. They prided themselves in feeling the true piety of the ancients for the gods in addition to sharing, as did André Chénier, Goethe, Manzoni, Vigny, and Lamartine, their love of physical beauty and a more or less profound understanding of the symbolism of mythology. They did not hesitate to proclaim the recognised permanent supremacy of classical Greece in the realm of pure beauty. When they endeavoured to blend modern thought with mythological fables, they had another end in view than only to imitate Greek artists and poets. Their real object was, following the example of Swinburne,[1] to rehabilitate ancient polytheism. They did not desire that decadent polytheism, the last superstitions of which still survive in certain remote towns of Greece, nor that gallantry of mythology, often puerile and fantastic, which erotic poets of all nations have exhausted by long centuries of use, but they aimed at the true ideas of primitive Greece, the great symbolism of Nature whence Aryan races drew their views and imagery.

§ 2.

Side by side with the Neo-pagans were to be found also the Neo-Christians, who were one with them in their equally strong aversion for the prevailing form of literature, namely, grim obscenity, melancholy monographs, and the disinclination to literature as art for art's sake. They differed from them in their theory of the moral value of religious faith and the notion that ideas were nobler than dogmas.[2]

[1] Besides his early dramas and later works social in tendency, Swinburne attracted great attention by his *Poems and Ballads* (1865–1878). Criticism was very severe on these lofty reproductions of Greek fables. Swinburne paraphrased antique passions to excess, with which he blended the excess and pessimism of his own nature. His paganism—melancholy, keen, cruel—is very different in these very qualities from Hellenic art, which breathes out happiness, calm pleasure, and tenderness.

[2] Cp. the works of Melchior de Voguë, Paul Desjardins, and Edouard Rod, and the *Intellectual Aristocracy* by Henri Bérenger (1895).

Some went considerably beyond this practical Renanism. Poets and novelists gave rein to the imagination and knew no limits to which psychic aspirations might not rise.

A considerable time had passed since Goerres, Zacharias Werner, Novalis, Oscar de Redwitz had given to the world their tentative efforts in Neo-Catholic lyrical poetry, with which they hoped to lull their weary souls. Their attempt, applied now to other branches of literature and revived by writers of inferior endowments, appeared as a novelty in France and Belgium. From the latter class we must eliminate the names of Villiers de l'Isle Adam, the almost talented author of *Future Eve*, and *Tribulat Bonhomet*, of Huysmans (at least Huysmans in his second manner), and of Maeterlinck. We rarely see illustrated by most striking discordances the justice of the saying that "extremes meet," even if excess does not beget excess. A kind of exalted and unhealthy mysticism appeared in opposition to the crude realism which annexed to itself the exclusive rights of science,[1] of truth, and of the knowledge of man. It was the result of the indirect influence of Russian or Norwegian books, translations of which began to circulate. Workers of miracles existed still. There were also Theosophists. "Illuminati" of a new stamp, sincere or no, wrote and discoursed, claiming to extend the power of the human faculties to the farthest limits of the supernatural; they so insisted upon this that at last they made others believe in them. For a number of years there was an epidemic of mystical fictions which, together with the deluge of feminine elucubrations, form one of the most marked infatuations of the latter end of the nineteenth century. Physical sciences realised the impossible in land, sea, and sky; men looked for the unexpected in psychical sciences, which were studied in the misty domain of the Beyond and subjected to the most audacious attempts at divination. People had never

[1] Notably the recent researches in medical science, which has furnished materials for fiction.

before spilt so much ink on the therapeutics of the soul. A prodigious international literature, newspapers, and meetings spread the feverish inquiries into the so-called "occult" sciences throughout the world, in France, still more in England, America, Germany, and Russia.[1]

§ 3.

Whilst certain writers, lost in the clouds, were drawing their inspiration from empty visions, poets with equal liberty endeavoured to gaze on the world through a prism of dreams, or tried to produce "novel sensations" by dint of eccentric and complicated metres. Owing to the vague nature of their aspirations they were subject to all kinds of influences, more or less definite, which prevailed at the time, such, for example, as that of Wagner, of the English Pre-Raphaelites, or, again, the reflex action of impressionism or the philosophical tendencies of Germany and subsequently of Norway. They strove blindly to discover, in order to produce variety of expression, a new science of ideas, in which all the tones and shades of painting, music, and literature were blended. They were called "Decadents," though they styled themselves more nobly "Symbolists."

They chose as their past-master Baudelaire, and among their present leaders Stephane Mallarmé, who by a singular privilege won celebrity *for not having written the work which was expected of him*, and which he would infallibly have placed on an æsthetic basis, the resultant of his studies of Hegel and Wagner. Another was Verlaine, "poor Lelian," as he called himself to the end of his days, who, unable to guide himself, was highly astonished that he was supposed to direct others.[2]

[1] "A certain number of unexpected and marvellous forces were discovered in the external world which when subjugated to man transformed and will further transform the world. Similarly in the inner world the hidden depths of the soul have been fathomed and the results obtained will be made use of for the benefit of all."—Jules Bois.

[2] Paul Verlaine was, moreover, far superior to his so-called followers.

In the beginning of the Symbolist period Baudelaire's influence predominated ; he was one of the first,[1] as author of the *Fleurs du Mal*, to introduce impressionism into literature. According to him the senses should act on the understanding, and not the understanding on the senses ; and the individual quality of his reasoning led him to grasp the intimate bond of union between certain things imperceptible to other eyes. The idea of totality was produced in him by a series of associated sensations. In the name of a single object he found enough elements to evoke numerous and varied ideas as if they were simple effects of sound or colour, resemblances or imagery. By an easy deduction his followers went so far as to say that the mere sound of a word being communicated to the senses was capable of giving rise to a special sensation, which in turn, acting on the mind, was productive of thought. We may guess, if we do not know, whither the use and abuse of such a system would lead us. The personal equation existed no more ; thought had no longer to govern imagination, but to merely receive impressions communicated to it by certain sights or sounds, which had a meaning apart, a conventional value determined beforehand. Every author, not being bound to proceed by analogy, nor enchained by grammatical rules, by syntax or the accepted standard of composition, was free to place the individual members of his sentence in any order he pleased with a view to courting effect by strange juxtaposi-

In composing his *Fêtes galantes*, *Bonheur*, and *Parallèlement* he indulged in systematic eccentricities which have been too much admired. On the other hand, in his addresses to Heine and to German song, he created new rhymes, produced happy effects of harmony, and from his ill-defined source of inspiration evolved wonderful examples of great beauty. His language is both supple and vigorous.

[1] Like Baudelaire, and before him and prior to Gautier and Sainte-Beuve, Hoffmann, author of the *Yellow Rays*, the celebrated German writer, had endeavoured to express rare and varied sensations in poetry. The scent of a carnation, he declared, made him hear the sound of a horn. Concerning the sickly sensibility of Baudelaire or Verlaine, see *Psychopathia Sexualis*, by Krafft Ebing.

tions or weird antitheses. Even the best of poets found pleasure in indulging in medleys and intricacies, immersed as they were in the vague and abstract. The Symbolists from the very first, greatly enamoured of the metaphysical sentimentalism and the poetic diction of Shelley, Keats, and Swinburne, had a dim notion of a free and productive art, full of ideas and distant analogies. Their ambitions were great, but they left behind nought but the expression of those desires and the mere husks of their ideas. Among so many different casts of mind there was but one true bond of union, namely, a concerted search into the regions of the vague and undefined. An ultimate rupture was bound to follow. Some continued to write verse, many others turned to simple and flowing prose. Some curious attempts remain to bear witness to their efforts, notably the experiment in regard to the multiform ode so much desired by Théodore de Banville, the delicate and refined effects of plastic art, and the interesting metrical reforms which culminated in the stanza of irregular lines.[1]

§ 4.

Notwithstanding, these various currents, in all their minute and capricious ramifications, had not to any appreciable extent affected the progress or character of literature in general. In the eyes of critics of literature these extreme refinements of the later school of poetry were of no greater importance than the attempts of the gloomy poet Maurice Scève in the sixteenth century, or of the extravagances of certain imitators of Ronsard. For the mass of superficial readers they were a closed book. Great warfare was waged between the different literary groups concerning such agitating questions as to the part played by tonic accent, middle rhyme or end rhyme, the legitimacy of a line of seventeen syllables,

[1] Concerning the use of irregular verse which constituted "the harmonious instrument of a whole generation," see *Figures and Caractères*, by Henri de Régnier, 1901.

or the vices and virtues of the *e* mute ! Public peace of mind was never for one moment troubled by these matters. When weighed in the balances they were too trivial to outbalance the general interests of the world, that world which continued on its way without certain dreamers being apparently aware of the fact. Political conditions were changed with astonishing rapidity. Economic principles which had proved adequate for numerous generations now visibly underwent far-reaching changes. Whilst the most ancient monarchies of Europe were crumbling to decay, new empires were arising upon the ruins of bygone institutions, or amidst the hitherto uncultivated lands of distant continents.[1] In view of such great events the party discussions of small literary groups sank into insignificance. The attention of the public was captured by other interests more within its grasp ; great political rivalries, heated debates in the press, international rivalry in the world's markets of commerce and industry, prodigious colonial expansion, the frequent discoveries of physical and natural science, revolutionising the conditions of social existence and the sudden phenomenon of feminine emancipation. People discussed these great questions daily, and when weary of them sought relaxation in the works which were proffered on all sides to the careless and cosmopolitan taste of the end of the era.

For the last quarter of a century in France rival schools had existed. After the "Parnassians" and "Naturalists" came the "Decadents" and "Symbolists," then the "Neo-Christians," or Christian decadents, in whose eyes mysticism was only a form of sensuality, the theorists of an impossible ideal, the "Occultists" and the true or false "Ibsenists" ; finally, those who not unreasonably thinking that the mystic fancies of Norway had held sway over men's minds long enough, showed that it was time to return to the healthy traditions of French clearness of style. But so many tendencies and changes produced no consensus of

[1] Stéphane Lauzanne.

opinion, nor gave to public taste any very definite trend. The same decentralising forces are to be observed at this period in other lands, notably in Germany and Italy, where it would be difficult, amidst the multitude of books and of writers, to recognise a common source of these collateral tendencies, a marked relationship of talent or temperament, or a literary group worthy of taking precedence in matters of taste.

There has rarely existed a period of greater confusion or lawlessness.[1] Besides the general state of anarchy in art and literature, each writer or artist seems a prey to a kind of warfare within himself. As a matter of fact every one followed his own inclination, pursued his own ideal, or was prompted by mere curiosity; some completed a career in the way they had begun; others, yielding to their own bent, discarded tradition.

Let us look at some of them at work, whether long since or but recently come to fame. We will consider the France of the dawn of the twentieth century. André Theuriet, the faithful disciple of the great Sentimental School which took its rise about 1860, continues in his warm and convincing admiration for the beauties of nature. Jules Claretie, with his wealth of imagination, tries his hand at a multitude of subjects. François Coppée seems in the autumn of life unconsciously to follow German inspiration in his studies of the poor. On the stony soil of Provence, amid plane-trees and cypresses, Frederick Mistral, who nearly half a century since in a work of genius produced the illusion of a new language and a new poetry, represents the centre of the latest literary and philological efforts to revive the old language of the Troubadours. José Maria de Hérédia, recently a "Parnassian," formerly an adherent of the Romantic School, does not concern himself as to whether

[1] In 1899 a German critic, Dr. Theobald Ziegler, wrote a large volume to demonstrate the *fin-de-siècle* intellectual confusion of Germany. (Die geistigen and sozialen Strömungen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts.)

he has remained true to the tendencies of his time when at rare intervals his hand slowly chisels some delicate and exquisite jewel in verse. Sully-Prudhomme in 1901 prematurely traces in rigorous prose the lines of his "poetic testament," as if considering his great work of metaphysical ideality completed. Pierre Loti is the delicate painter of vague exotic sensations, and continues to evoke new emotions by his fine work. Anatole France has not abandoned that happy combination of natural gifts and acquired powers, of elegant erudition and amiable fancifulness which have made him rank as one of the most accomplished writers of his day. Jules Lemaître interrupts the double series of his masterly dramatic and literary criticisms to expend the resources of a highly developed talent amidst interminable political disputes. On the same lines Maurice Barrès, a follower of Stendhal in his earlier days, produces works of acute observation and frank testimony amidst the passions and fevers of the moment. The Academicians—Sorel, Brunetière, and Faguet —apply a profound knowledge, based on reasoning and ideas, together with a firm conviction, to the history of events or of literary productions. Psychologists of the school of Paul Bourget probe the heart of man to the very depths. Finally, while the early attempts at the poetic novel of Paul Adam and the scientific novel of the two brothers Rosny are being made, Marcel Prévost, Paul Margueritte, and Jules Bois busy themselves in the search of a new manner of love which shall be the ideal of a transformed Eve, perhaps the dream of future humanity.

On the stage Edmond Rostand once more sets up, and with astounding success, the banner of the Romantic School so rudely torn down by the Parnassians. Vigorous intellects in the suite of Henri Becque, such as Paul Hervieu, F. de Curel, Maeterlinck,[1] Lucien Descaves, and Octave Mirbeau,

[1] The Maeterlinck of the second manner, the author of *Monna Vanna* (1902) is very different from the misty dramatist, the occultist, "cosmogonist," the "poet of the invisible," characteristics people had already

with intense scrutiny penetrate the most intimate circle of social and human drama, and give us a glimpse of the approach of modern tragedy. Whilst the great majority of the "Vaudevillists" still enjoy no mean pecuniary success by following the dramatic doctrines of Scribe and Sardou, the more austere writers, or such as set up as being so, endeavour to present dramatically on the classical stage or at the Théâtre Antoine the visible exponents of certain states of conscience.

In addition we find imitations, translations, and sometimes adaptations of great foreign writers. One author endeavours to appear as profound as a Norwegian, another derives great satisfaction in assuming the sentimentality of a Russian, and in his best Tolstoyan style.[1] The majority of authors less ambitious as to the object or the manner of their works are content, seeing it is easier to do so, to merely amuse the passing generation. Throughout all this time we see the great stream of decadent luxury.

§ 5.

We have traced with especial care the lines of French literature from one end of the nineteenth century to the other, beginning with the pompous sterility of the Empire, the splendid poetic outburst of the Restoration, the abundance and variety of literary effort from 1830 to 1860; then the triumphs of realism at a time when the universal application of knowledge and industry had removed poetry from nature and life, when enjoyment had become the watchword of existence, and finally the passing reaction of Ibsenism.

It now remains lastly[2] to notice the following points: The

discovered in him when first Octave Mirbeau jokingly named him "the Belgian Shakespeare."

[1] We do not here make mention of the numerous writers who followed Sienkiewicz, Rudyard Kipling, Gabriel d'Annunzio, or Hermann Sudermann.

[2] "Had the arbitrary custom which divides time by periods of centuries not prevailed over reason and fact, we should have placed a time boundary

decline in the spread of French literature abroad, the notable diminution in the demand, both in Europe and America, for so many novels burdened with a dead weight of eternal descriptions of Paris and Parisian life; the deadening of the poetic sense, the average depreciation of talent, the general deterioration of literary effort. On the other hand, we must draw attention to an opposite tendency to this decay of imaginative work, namely, the immense interest, not noticeable for the last few years, shown by youthful students for the sciences of observation and construction.

§ 6.

In these times of great intellectual development what single literary school, whether Russian or Norwegian—that is to say, the favourite of the moment—could flatter itself in possessing the privilege of a marked ascendancy?

The literatures of individual nations which have certain points of intersection on the great highway of universal truth strive with a supreme effort of concentration to develop their own particular qualities, each following its own traditions or dreams with a view to living by itself and for itself, not withholding, however, the results of this literary effort from the rest of the world.

Thus England, which recently set up Gladstone as its ideal of justice and liberty, bestows immense popularity on Rudyard Kipling, its national bard—a sort of "sublime" journalist—because he exalted to an incredible extent the sentiment of pride and faith in the race, which under the name of Imperialism had become the type of public sentiment in Great Britain. Has he not been and is he not the sonorous trumpeter of Anglo-Saxon expansion throughout the world? Unlike his contemporary, William

after the death of Victor Hugo, Renan, Taine, and Pasteur, for at that time the intellectual work of the nineteenth century was already accomplished," says Gaston Deschamps, writing in the *Temps* of December 22, 1900.

Watson, that master of literary and poetic criticism who endeavoured to strengthen tradition and constituted a conservative factor, Kipling introduced a new element very different in force and vitality, which marks his epoch. With the author of the *Jungle Book* poetry ceased to be English and became British. Inspired in various ways, Rudyard Kipling, the exotic Stevenson, and Rider Haggard affected the heart of the nation with the "Imperial" sentiment, and aroused by their works that popular lust of domination—that is to say of the exclusive domination of the British race and character. Apart from her numerous novelists, England contributed even more generously to the intellectual advance of the world in virtue of her great philosophers[1] (whose works are the common study in other lands in the form of translations), of her historians, her critics and scholars. To these we may add her lovers of art, such as William Morris,[2] the delightful author of *News from Nowhere*, to whom must be credited the renaissance of decorative art, one of the most remarkable men ever endowed with diversity of genius; and the encyclopædic Ruskin, the spiritual hero and educator of souls,[3] the admiration of his compatriots for whom has become a veritable cult. We must add that if poetry seemed comparatively to decline in passing from the poet laureate Tennyson to his immediate heir, Alfred Austin, it by no means ceased to exist.[4]

[1] The leading lights, Alexander Bain, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer, belong already to the past as regards the date of their works.

[2] W. Morris, a writer of originality, was also a designer, a shopkeeper, a manufacturer, and the inventor of many things. In his shop in Oxford Street one could buy carpets, wall-papers, furniture, hangings, and pottery designed or executed by Morris. He was also an eloquent public speaker.

[3] The influence of Ruskin, thanks to his wealth of thought, the eloquence and brilliance of his style, combined with a sincere attitude in his capacity as a moralist and art critic, is analogous with that which Carlyle, Robert Browning, and Emerson exercised over those whom they sought to teach.

[4] See William Archer, *Poets of the Younger Generation*, the chapters on

Until recently, if one had had to name the real home of the novel, the soil on which this branch of literature, capable of absorbing the qualities of all the rest, had taken deepest root, one would not have hesitated to name Great Britain, the native land of Fielding, Walter Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot, and up to the present Meredith, the profound and complex analyst who reflects in his work all the problems of his day.

Now, in view of the numerous little volumes which issued from Boston, the favourite residence of Longfellow, Emerson, Wendell Holmes, Whittier, Agassiz, and Lowell, appearing almost simultaneously in London and Edinburgh, we may affirm, says an excellent judge,[1] that the novel which languished in England under an apparent profusion has emigrated to the United States, there to be revived with new qualities drawn from the observation of different habits and characters in the temperament of a race still possessing the fresh and robust qualities of youth. On the other hand, if an American were to sum up the whole course of the nineteenth century literary effort in his native land, it would suffice to recall the numerous names and works which we shall cite below, and which occupy such a brief space of time, in order to justifiably claim for his mother-country a very large place in the realm of letters. We begin with the Indian epics of Fenimore Cooper, which seem to us at the present day so far off ; the fine description of Washington Irving, the extraordinary imaginations of Edgar Allen Poe, the works of great moral and political value of Mrs. Beecher Stowe and Mrs. Cumming, or the lively and humoristic scenes of Haliburton and the fine satires and piquant character-drawing of Holmes, so different from the mocking parodies of Mark Twain. We go on to the admirable analysis of Hawthorne and the picturesque sketches of

Arthur Symons, Stephen Philips, John Davidson, Bliss Cannan, Richard Hovey, and others. (London : John Lane, 1902.)

[1] Thomas Bentzon.

Californian life by Bret Harte and of Creole life by George Cable, and conclude with mentioning the indescribable imaginations of Walt Whitman, the most disconcerting writer of prose or verse that ever existed. On the threshold of the new century William Dean Howells and Henry James[1] complete the glorious list, for they are the authors of the best novels in the English language at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. England herself is the first to bear witness to it in her journals and reviews, and the avowal is all the more remarkable as she herself possesses at the present time novelists of great talent, such as George Meredith, the subtle portraitist of feminine character, and Thomas Hardy, the gifted analyst belonging both to the Romantic and the Modern School.

Such is the extent and rapidity of expansion in every direction of the "new society" of the United States, an energetic and restless people whose gigantic progress in all regions of human activity is one of the most remarkable phenomena of modern times. The ambition of a people, proud of having in a hundred years gone through all the stages of the oldest civilisations, knows no limits. Having conquered the first position in the world financially, industrially, commercially, and in applied sciences having attained an astounding superiority, it aspires with the same eager and tenacious intensity to gain intellectual supremacy, more difficult to win and harder to preserve.[2]

§ 7.

It cannot be doubted that the cult of ideas and of pure

[1] We might add the talented South African, Olive Schreiner, the energetic champion of oppressed peoples.

[2] The great publishing houses of New York and Boston (Harper, Lippencott, Appleton, Scribner, and the *Century*) put on the market an alarming number of volumes, from the sale of which sudden and ephemeral reputations may sometimes be gained.

sentiment diminished in proportion as ambitions of a more positive character arose in Germany.

The Germany of yore, divided against herself and weak, devoted herself with whole-hearted fervour to the pursuit of lofty schemes of moral education and the improvement of the people.

Having reached her highest development, she busied herself with maintaining and increasing her political hegemony as her dearest object in view. During her period of disunion and tentative effort she had been remarkably productive in the realm of thought, imagination, philosophy and poetry, and during her maturity she had shown ample proof of possessing a glorious language, history, and literature. After her unification by arms and conquest the ideal of former years appeared suddenly to be far off and Utopian. Germany no longer thought of exalting, otherwise than by reminiscence, the love of beauty and moral grandeur which had been her aim in former times, but rather the interests of the moment, power, and the supremacy of an exaggerated militarism which exhausted all Europe. Having shaken off the yoke of militarism just as she had abandoned her former metaphysical meditations, we see her enter the lists of the industrial and commercial contest, and therein she expended her greatest vitality as if to prove the truth of the saying of an Austrian minister: "The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries found their motive-force in religion, the eighteenth in liberty, the nineteenth in racial strife for predominance, the twentieth will find it in commercial and industrial competition." Nevertheless Germany has not allowed the value or quality of her knowledge to diminish. There has been a decline in philosophical influence[1] both at home and abroad, a decay of poetry despite certain brilliant excep-

[1] About the year 1900 two German thinkers represented the two opposite poles of thought, namely, the positivist Wundt, who followed the English school, and Deussen, who drew his mysticism from Buddhist sources.

tions,[1] and an extreme decline in original dramatic production, marked by an absolutely slavish imitation of French pieces. Apart from a small group of novelists still capable of depicting characters in a life-like and picturesque manner, the literary fount of inspiration seemed to have dried up. However, the intellectual work of Germany constitutes no mean and trifling effort; even immediately after the Franco-German War, leaving England and Russia quite out of the question, it exercised a genuine influence on the course of French thought. There was an appreciable change of direction of intellectual effort. The impulse given to science placed it in the position which half a century before had been occupied by metaphysics and philosophy. Culture of a universal character was the summit of ambition and the most heartfelt wish of this land so distinguished by its love of learning, a land stimulated by an unsatiable desire for knowledge though in the midst of the advanced state of general culture individual excellence was in danger of passing unnoticed. Never was the German mind, weighed down by so heterogeneous a conglomeration of Scandinavian, French, English, Russian, and also local elements, less in concordance with Wagner's ideal. Foreign currents flow in on all sides;[2] there is a marked desire and a boundless curiosity to know, to become possessed of and to adapt many features of the intellectual life of the rest of Europe, the United States, and the Far East. Contemporary German

[1] Among other German poets we might mention the name of Gottfried Keller, who has been dead about a quarter of a century, if Switzerland does not claim him as one of her sons.

[2] On the German stage we find the changes rung in a very brief space of time on plays derived from a great variety of sources, translated from the French, German, Italian, Spanish, Norwegian, Czech, modern Greek, and, strange to relate, even Japanese and Montenegrin. The French authors, Sardou, Hervieu, Donnay, Capus, Lavedan, Porto-Riche, Fabre, and Brieux are in great favour. At the beginning of the twentieth century the names of foreign authors most read in Germany included Sienkiewicz Tolstoy, Zola, Gorki, Gustav von Gejerstam, Gabriele d'Annunzio, Marcel Prévost and Mirbeau.

culture aims at being universal in character, and largely resembles the undefined aspirations of France in the eighteenth century. The result of this ambition is that a high standard has been reached ; German scientific method has preserved its authority, not to say absolute precedence, in Europe. The admirable organisation of higher education in Germany[1] has maintained its supremacy, though it finds serious rivals in the Universities of France, England, and the United States. Everywhere the taste for modern languages and for instruction of an eminently practical character has made rapid strides ; in short, in all branches of learning, natural science, history, geography, law, philosophy, and languages we see at every step the influence and work of Germany, which is the fountain-head of research.

From contemporary Germany have flowed the following intellectual currents : the changed attitude towards antique studies due to the schools of Boeckh and Mommsen, the scientific materialism of Büchner, the systematic evolutionary theories of Haeckel, the pessimism of Schopenhauer, the doctrines of Nietsche, the philosophy of Dühring, the literary interpretations of Strauss and of Bauer, the drama of Sudermann and Hauptmann, not forgetting the æsthetic revolution of Wagner.

§ 8.

Italy's artistic star began to pale ever since she was suddenly seized with megalomania, and turned aside from occupations of a purely intellectual character to throw herself into the contest for material supremacy and the battle of social ideas. Such feverish agitations did not, however, check certain authors of talent nor serve to stifle the undying faculty of imagination. Poetry, too, made its last accents heard in the voice of Giuseppe Carducci, growing perceptibly weaker but still vigorous. The novel, which from the time of

[1] See the list of articles appearing in the first number of a Review published in July, 1902, at Cologne, under the title of *Die Kultur*.

Boccacio to Manzoni had only appeared in one form, that of the simple tale unaccompanied by an elaborate study of personal or general sentiments, now assumed, in the hands of Fogazzaro, Gabriele d'Annunzio and Mathilde Serao, an importance and a variety hitherto unknown. Dramatic authors thought they had discovered a means of reviving their art in the new current of naturalism. Thence Giuseppe Giacosa drew his inspiration for his *Sorrows of Love* (1888), and his work, following the purely romantic style of Paolo Ferrari, created considerable sensation. The *Moglie ideale* of Mario Praga (1890), and the *Disonesti* of Gerolamo Rovetta proceeded from the same source, and then a renaissance of the Italian stage was hoped for. Unfortunately it did not take long to see that these realistic paintings of social life, when transplanted to the stage, had no æsthetic value, and could not be of lasting influence. As compensation for this, there appeared the brilliant, capricious, complex, and unstable artist, d'Annunzio.

Contemporary Italy must be credited, we have said, with contributing to the competition for international glory the works of Fogazzaro and Gabriele d'Annunzio. Spain recalls the names, already somewhat out of date, of Pedro Antonio Alarçon, Campaomor, Nunez de Arce, Pereda, and Palacio Valdes ; she proclaims aloud those of Echegaray, Guimerà, Perez Galdos and Benavente.[1] But we fail to recognise the powers of imagination and the strength of her recent evolution. The mental atmosphere is not calculated to favour the development of ideas. The national spirit is only stirred superficially. Certain characteristic symptoms, erotism, reveal more clearly than the literary fruits of the imagination, namely the persistence of naturalism, or, as others say, of the return to the religious and clerical problem and the advent of the political novel. With some rare and brilliant exceptions

[1] We might, in passing, mention the poetic attempt of Balart, who, while still adhering to the classical traditions, introduced a hitherto untried note into the *seguedilla* (a kind of Spanish song and dance).

the outlook for the period which extends from 1885 to the beginning of the new century is gloomy in the extreme. The unfortunate nation lay paralysed with a series of afflictions, the dismemberment of her colonial empire in both East and West, and at home the enormous increase in taxation had reduced her to a state of weakness which recalled the evil days of Charles IV. The double burden of clericalism and militarism weighed down and crushed her. One is forced to ask oneself whether the old Iberian nation will always remain the Spain of the Middle Ages, "picaresque," antiquated, and fanatic in its love for the past, with its feudal customs so strangely anachronistic at the beginning of the twentieth century. But everything is subject to the laws of change, and a revolution in ideas must have touched Spain just as it has penetrated even the most remote corners of autocratic Russia. As recently as 1901 the representation of the *Electra* at Madrid gave the signal for a tumultuous outbreak against the old monastic tyranny. Furthermore, it is apparent that the Spanish temperament, though still very intolerant,[1] has become somewhat more humane and more accessible to notions of pity, solidarity, and progress both in aim and action. The influence of Northern Europe is patent in this change. When we read the later dramas of Perez Galdos, we feel far removed from the Spanish models of former years; we seem rather to be contemplating a play of Norwegian origin than one by a successor of Lope de Vega.

§ 9.

The influence of Ibsen has been almost immeasurable throughout all the Romance, Teutonic, and Slav languages.

[1] The cruel instincts of the race were revealed in the Christian heart of Canovas, when he cold-bloodedly martyred the anarchists of Barcelona, and presided over the tortures which formed a sanguinary spectacle at the fortress of Montjuiche. The same "Christian" sentiments did not prevent General Polaveja from having the Philippine prisoners shot, nor General Weyler from organising his dreadful camps in Cuba which roused the indignation of the whole world against him.

Ibsenism introduced into Europe, even extending as far as Spain, various peculiarities, and spread a kind of intellectual epidemic something like the mania for affectation in literature which characterised the latter years of the sixteenth and early years of the seventeenth centuries. Its notable features were the abuse of allegory, the master's bias towards the strange interpretation of natural phenomena, his contradictions, his paradoxes and his worship of woman, a worthy counterpart of Richard Wagner's excessive adoration of her. We must not forget, however, that the plays of Ibsen, when sufficiently submitted to a healthy and judicious criticism, present a certain number of characters who are excellent types of modern men and women, and that in future times Nora, Solness, Hedda Gabler, Oswald, Brand, and Stockman will appear as striking impersonations of restless individualism, of boundless desire for liberty, of phases of mysticism, and of moral neurosis which have afforded authors striking "copy."

It was in the North that dramatic reform was started, and consisted in putting on the stage the intimate life of every day in its most common incidents and relations, a change which will perhaps later merit the reproach of lack of action, of motive and of stage effect. In addition, many contemporary tales and poems reflect that uneasy melancholy which is so characteristic of Norwegian and Swedish poets.[1] At the present time, apart from Ibsen, Björnsen, Ola Hansson, and even Strindberg, Scandinavia has entered upon a career of literary development such as had few parallels in the history of letters.

[1] We might also mention those other highly strung poets of Northern Europe, who have but recently won a great European reputation, or who at least deserve one, namely, the Russian writers, Maxim Gorki and Marie Konopnicka. The latter is a talented poetess; the former introduced into literature studies of the lowest dregs of society. We must not omit the Polish novelist, Elise Orzeszko, who presents altruism in its highest development of power and expansion.

§ 10.

In the wealth of material before us it is hard to know what to say and what to leave unsaid. We must lay more stress on the extraordinary development of Russian genius (for we only just touched upon it in the merest outline), a development which sprang up from the very soil of Russia itself; on the influence of Tolstoyism, which, like the Darwinism of another branch of letters, has been one of the most powerful factors of modern thought. Again we must call to notice the reforms carried on in the dramatic work of the rivals or followers of Ostrowski and Alexis Poteickhine; and more especially the immense amount of material at the disposal of the novelists, those observers of the future, in the study of the grave troubles in Russia at the present time, in her sore need for liberty, her aspirations for justice and freedom, her latent agitations, which are but the forerunners of the sudden conflicts and fierce battles of the future. Such a state of affairs will be the inevitable result of the disabilities of a large mass of society, and which will be, in addition, unavoidably and prematurely hastened by a long and hopeless war, namely, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904.

What is to be said of those brave and tender-hearted writers who have not waited for the issue of the struggle in order to take up so painful a study?

Henceforth a precise and well-defined programme serves as a guide to the efforts of novelists who are prepared to continue the great advance which followed the abolition of the serfs. They have adopted a doctrine full of confidence and guided by those principles which critics have praised for half a century; a special reference is here being made to Tchernichevsky, Dobrovlioubov, Pissarev and Michailevsky, who, more or less, rigorously substituted the theory of "art for life's sake" for that of "art for art's sake."

Some few authors of later times remained uninfluenced by the general progress of the Russian mind, either because they

attached themselves, like Merejowsky, to producing picturesque studies of the Renaissance or pagan antiquity, or because, like Minsky, they took delight in evolving an original versification, or finally because, like Belmont, they claimed a share of the heritage of Shelley, or like Ivanov, the qualities of an ingenious and subtle Neo-Hellenist.

Such as these walked in side-paths away from the beaten track.[1] Their art knows little of the work of national education, which is the boast of men like Tchekhov, Verassiev, Tchirkov, Gorki, Korolenko, and more especially the restless Andreiev, to understand and further.

The last representatives of the "Naturalistic School" studied in the most intimate way possible the sordid and gloomy environment in which their brothers of the great human family, hitherto considered utterly beneath sentimental analysis, eked out a miserable existence. They took as their models factory hands, humble functionaries and peasants, all those unpretentious beings of whom the vast majority never so much as suspect that they have any claim to happiness. They created a literature unknown before their time, or before that of their master, Tolstoi—*the literature of the moujik*, and descending lower still if possible, have added thereto, as did Gorki,[2] little suspecting that a Frenchman had preceded him on these lines, the *literature of the vagabond*, who belongs to that strange caste of heterogeneous and free beings, as capricious as Nature itself, and outcasts because they have failed to find an outlet for such powers and qualities as were possibly innate in them.

In this new production of the democratic and documentary novel we can follow step by step the inevitable changes in the intellectual progress of a great people only just emerging from its former serfdom, and which, uncertain of its own

[1] In 1866 Jules Vallès, who always was a violent opponent of socialism and Bohemianism, produced his strange book, *Refractory People*, with his usual bitterness and brutality, in a florid, vivid, and striking style.

[2] Gorki, *On the Steppes*, 1902; Andreiev, *The Gulf*, 1903.

powers, tests its own resources, its capacities for dream or action, and with the view to deriving the greatest possible benefit and the amelioration of existence makes tentative efforts as to the choice of means to carry them out.

Vague and indistinct images float, like so many shadows, above the black figures at the back of the picture. The French love of clearness is pained by these weird and unwonted enigmas. We encounter the representation of strange and confused states of conscience which represent clearly nothing short of the torments of the soul, the anguish of a heated imagination, psychological torture, and sorrows as disconcerting as they are useless. This mystical indecision corresponds to the fluctuating state of Russian society slowly advancing towards its destiny, which is rather suggested than perceived. It is only a kind of semi-transparent mist, through which may be seen clearly, despite the restrictions of an oppressive censorship, the conditions of a life full of trouble and poverty, of sorrows past and present, stifling the hopes and aspirations of the mass, the enormous majority, of simple-minded and ignorant men.

The unforeseen evolution of Czech thought, though less moving and less profoundly human, nevertheless would deserve to occupy us for a considerable time. The chief source of interest lies in the description of the remarkable and significant awakening of Bohemia, which, thanks to its writers of all classes, is re-establishing the full independence of its language and national spirit. Bohemia, oppressed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the Catholic counter-reformation, resumed during the first half of the nineteenth century her ancient free traditions in the work of Jean Kollar, Ladislav, Celakovsky, Wenzel Hanka, and the scholar Safarik. After 1848 the long-delayed adherence to the Romantic School of Joseph Fric, Neruda Viteslav Halek, the leaders of the second Czech Renaissance, showed that the fame of Byron, of Pouckhine, and of Mickiewicz, had resounded in sonorous notes on the shores

of the Vlatava. There was to be no going back ; the language of John Huss and Palacky had broken the last bonds which the Austro-German domination had imposed. Prague became once more the centre of very keen and very independent intellectual activity. National authors, endowed with an epic temperament like Zeyer, that man of manifold genius, or the fertile and tireless Jaroslav Vrchlicky, or of an essentially Slav character such as the Czech Svatopluk, appeared to their compatriots equal to the most distinguished minds of the West, just as the novelist, Caroline Svietla (Madame Musakova), seemed quite worthy of the epithet of the Bohemian, George Sand.[1]

As we are dealing with territories in which the Pan-Russian spirit desires, above all things, to extend its dominion with the force and far-reaching character of a deluge, it would be amiss not to inquire into the work of the Servians and Bulgarians, who have rapidly progressed in the multiplication of schools, newspapers, and means for scientific work. Belgrade, Sofia, and Philippopoli were but barbarian villages three-quarters of a century ago ; they are to-day the very centres of learning. Where but recently there existed a mixture of tongues without link or historic cohesion, we find in Belgrade, Zara, and Cetinje a concise language, recalling with legitimate pride the treasures of its national poetry, and for a long series of centuries maintained and renewed unceasingly by constant fidelity to the manners, legends, and beliefs of the country. A common and a revivified language was imposed on certain of the provinces, which has become, thanks to the proclamation of the independence of Servia and Montenegro, not only one of the political languages of Eastern Europe, but also a successful

[1] Among the most recent names in Czech literature we must mention that of the author of the *Torches of the Past*, Simacek Aloys Jirasek, a new Czech Walter Scott, and the talented follower of Havsla ; also a clever psychologist, Kronbauer ; and finally the novelist, critic, and polemical writer, Vaclav Hladik, who is specially enthusiastic in regard to cosmopolitan literature.

instrument in the revival of literature, and worthy vehicle for the admirable work of the Servian poets.[1]

It would not be less curious to follow the efforts of Greek writers at the end of the nineteenth century, as they continue the line of the most ancient and glorious traditions, for as soon as the Greeks were conscious of their strength and freedom, they did not fail to fulfil their great destiny. The battles they waged among themselves, either in attacking or defending the popular tongue, only reacted to its advancement and perfection. How justly proud must those poets, critics, novelists, journalists be who write on modern themes in the language of Thucydides or Xenophon!

When summing up all these efforts we have omitted the remarkable intellectual revival in Hungary in the nineteenth century. The names of the past, such as Voeroesmarty and Petoefi, live again in Cziki, Doczy, Eötvös, and Jokai. We should hardly have been inclined to compare the unexpected contributions of the Asiatic mind, and especially of Japan, with the enormous output of European and American works, yet Japan is the country which publishes the most books in

[1] Croatia has a literary history of which documents exist dating back beyond the thirteenth century, and even to-day she enjoys a literary activity of her own, Belgrade and Zagreb forming the chief centres. Besides popular poetry properly so-called (namely, a continual blend of vivid imagination with naive faith, of active heroism and dreamy idealisation), Servian literature flourished greatly from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, when Raguse in Dalmatia boasted of its sweet singer, Derjiti, or the severe Mavro-Vetranitj, and later John Gundulitz and Palmatitj. Goethe, in the eighteenth century, called Milutinowitch his oriental successor. The great changes which took place about 1830 in all Slav territories, both in the centre and south, gave a marked impulse to literature. After the successful attempt of Gaï and Vouk Stephanowitch the Croatians adopted Servian as their official language. Demeter, the dramatic writer, who has been compared to Pouckhine; Lublotitj, known for his original ballads; Ostrajinski, a writer who became a classic even during his lifetime; Sima Milotinovitch, Subbotitch, Zmaj-Jovan-Jovanovitch, and more recent authors still, have largely contributed in assuring the triumph of this language, which has given the Servian nation its philological and literary unity.

the world,[1] its literature crossing the frontier, and ambitiously makes its appearance in the old world, penetrating even to Europe, where we find French, German, and Italian translations, bringing before us the most remarkable productions of Riutei Tanehiko, the dramatist of Nippon.[2]

[1] The activity of the publishing houses in Japan is prodigious. In 1903 the firm of Schuppan Karsha, of Tokio, began to publish a Buddhist encyclopædia at the rate of ten volumes a month, the whole to consist of 360 volumes and 72,000 pages.

[2] The claim of forgetting nothing will lead us too far. We can only call attention to the interest which attaches to the great vitality of Armenian poetry (ninth to twentieth century, from Gregory de Narek to Tchobanian), which persists, in spite of the nameless distresses of that unfortunate people, perpetually oppressed by all its conquerors. We can only mention the unexpected awakening of the Arab imagination on the banks of the Nile, and simply hint at the Neo-Turkish intellectual movement which began with the great scholar Ahmed Midhat, who was called the Turkish Voltaire, and his faithful follower Nadje, and the poet Kemal-Bey, and continuing under the versatile writer Halid Zia, closed with certain schools of oriental decadence, interesting to study in their attempts at assimilating the Mussulman spirit to the Parisian.

If, through lack of space or fear that excess of details would mar the grasp of the general outline of the picture, already somewhat overloaded, we have been compelled to omit the abundant developments of the literatures which are springing up in South America, it would nevertheless be interesting to see how the Mexican Gutierrez Najara, Lugones, and Dario would stand comparison with the best French, German, or Italian poets of to-day, or to what extent it would be possible to liken the unfortunate Cuban, José, to Carlyle as regards the originality and complexity of his genius.

It is worthy of comment how productive has been the literature of Venezuela, the land of Andrès Bello, as also of the Argentine Republic, where the progress of national culture becomes daily more evident, whereas, at the same time, the influence of France makes a deep impression, despite the great expanse of ocean between.

Finally, to the most recent developments of the Portuguese muse we must add the important contributions of Brazil. We ought to follow up its evolution for the three generations (from 1830 to 1860, from 1860 to 1875, and from 1875 to the present time), which have done their part in making Brazilian literature noteworthy. They include in the first period the poet Goncalvès Dias, the historian Antonio Henriques Real, the journalist Juan Francisco Lisboa, and the Brazilian Virgil, Otero Mendez; in the second, Almaida Braga, the dramatist Joaquin Serra, the novelist Sabas de Costa, and the lyrical poets Franco de Sâ and Dias Carneiro; and

§ 11.

Scarcely a year passes but new intellectual areas are opened up, and traces of unknown literature appear as if seemingly to correspond to those peoples of Europe and Asia as have but recently come into prominence. Ideas are interchanged, and from the union springs a kind of international spirit which spreads through the world.

As we have just noticed, the various literatures, relying on their past, endeavoured to stem the tide of cosmopolitan invasion which inundates them, and well-nigh carries them away on its bosom. Yet these literatures have many points of contact, and insensibly influence one another. However much they resist, and however much they establish on all sides a "Protectionist policy" in regard to a free international exchange, they do not and cannot escape the thousand instances of enforced contact, imposed by the perpetual ebullition of affairs.

We have more than once insisted on the threefold influence of Tolstoy, who stamped the novel of every language and of every kind with his views of morality and his conceptions of art ; of Ibsen, who impressed on dramatic authors, both at home and abroad, the necessity of introducing into modern dramas the operations of the individual conscience as a motive force ; and lastly of Wagner, who by his great art hypnotises all lovers of music. These three belong already to the past. Nearer to our own day are d'Annunzio, Kipling, Olive Schreiner, Sienkiewicz,[1] and the no less successful Edmond Rostand, who have laid claim to universal recognition. Again, Sudermann, who, though so

in the third the South American, Azevedo, a schoolmaster and naturalist, Celso Magalhaes, Hogo Leal, Teofilo Dias, and Raimundo Correa.

[1] The unprecedented success of Sienkiewicz is explained by the clever manner in which this author has developed the historical novel, attaching less importance to actual facts than to the depicting of a social, material, and intellectual atmosphere, as did also Walter Scott, Dumas, and Wilibald Alexis.

thoroughly imbued with the modern German spirit, and revealing the inmost soul of the Germany of to-day, has yet given to his characters such a touch of humanity in general that they are true for all countries, and might appear in any dress and speaking any language.

Thus European literature, combining its forces with that of America, aims at a universal literature of humanity. Common ideas penetrate and circulate in countries very different, and apparently unapproachable in character, owing to diversities produced by the modifications of climate and temperament. Individualism appears in Germany or elsewhere as the doctrine of Nietsche or of Ibsen indifferently. In Italy d'Annunzio calls it *the true sense of existence*, while Ellen Key, the talented Swedish authoress, considers it the way of the elect, leading to a better condition of things, in which humanity will be greater, happier, and more fruitful. Here and there we always find that same intense impression of superior energy, of persistent will, in which individual expression is revealed in its highest degree.[1] Similarly, the humanitarianism and redemptorism of Tolstoy imbue even the most material minds of both North and South. The password of yesterday—exact knowledge without idealisation—has become to-day a dominant note of passionate sympathy; cold hearts are touched and filled with feelings of pity, humanity, and a consciousness of the world-wide brotherhood.[2] And amidst these great currents, which constitute the forces of fiction and drama, there run through-

[1] We must call to mind that the emphasis given to individualism is but a return, though with a well-defined added moral sense, to the aspirations of the sixteenth century, when the humanism of the great Italian Renaissance tended to cultivate the human plant so that it should attain its maximum force and beauty, and carried æsthetic egotism to excess under the title of *virtuosity*.

[2] Democratic literature has gained ground on aristocratic literature, even in England, where, under the influence of the author of the *Tragic Comedians*, a rival of Balzac, the novel has undergone complete transformation in dealing with social questions hitherto always prudently avoided.

out the world in books or newspapers questions of international importance which come to the fore from time to time. Such questions as socialism, raised by Marx, Lassalle, and Henry George; anarchism, introduced by Bakounine and Stirner; the emancipation of woman, which springs up in many directions; colonial war, emigration, disarmament, and the love of gold.

Strictly speaking, we could from the present time recognise in its all-embracing character the collective types of the "world literature," however changing the mere outward form, or however numerous the works may be. Future ages will be able to recognise by certain leading signs what were the main characteristics of the present time, when literature embarked on the stormy sea of modern culture. Such marks will be found, for example, in the great increase of historical and critical knowledge; the importance paid to the scientific side of art; the decay of poetry under the overpowering preponderance of the novel in France, America, Russia, and Norway, in which egotistical tendencies are developed to be eventually emerged in generous and altruistic sentiments. Again in the predominance on the stage and in books of the springs of action and emotion rather than the passing interests of the individual or of the moment; the very marked tendency, both in drama and novel, to deal more especially with social problems, and to "socialise" literature; finally, the general moral unrest occasioned by the reactionary ideas of the American writers, David Thoreau and Henry George, by Ruskin, Nietsche, Tolstoy, and Gorki, an uneasiness experienced despite a high state of civilisation, and far-reaching in its consequences.[1]

[1] This outcry against civilisation and its effects on the world was started by an English writer, Charles Hall, in a work published as early as 1805, and reprinted 1849. (See the Dutch Review, *Gids*, November, 1902, an article by H. P. G. Quack.)

CONCLUSION

I.—The first ideas which arise from the consideration of the history of so many literatures—The uncertainty of the certain works and of their authors—Literary wreckage—The most palpable results of reviewing a wide field of work.

II.—Common characteristics of great intellectual movements—Similarity between different epochs of literature.

III.—The common sources of inspiration and basis of the first and general ideas from which the human mind has drawn in all ages.

IV.—The contribution of each nation to the general stock without any taking absolute pre-eminence.

V.-VII.—The right of precedence disputed among the various civilisations both ancient and modern ; in most instances not a lasting or exclusive privilege—The growth and decline of literatures which were at one time predominant—Their respective merits ; their advantages and relative imperfections—The Oriental imagination : its charms and its illusions and relative imperfections—Greek genius and its weaker side—The French mind—The Italian and Spanish mind—German thought—Anglo-Saxon talent—The literary temperament of the Russians.

VIII.-IX.—Interdependence of literatures : their continual exchanges and mutual loans.

X.-XI.—Distinct in both origin and character, we see them blend in harmonious unity—The concentration and narrowing of range of to-day—The future of language and literature.

I

LITERARY STATISTICS : WORKS THAT HAVE SURVIVED TILL THE PRESENT TIME

As we approach the end of so laborious a journey throughout the world of thought in all ages and in all latitudes,

we are conscious of a profound, not to say melancholy, impression.

How illusory great literary fame seems when we see endless works produced seemingly imperishable at the time of creation, but soon to be lost or forgotten! How many authors and how many works follow one another into oblivion! The would-be historian of this literary wreckage would have a lengthy and laborious task to perform.

The fate of books is very diverse. Some after having seen dark and difficult beginnings insensibly gain ground throughout the ages, and lay a forcible hold on the future. Thus the works of Dante, Milton, Camoens, and Cervantes are the glory of the age which despised them. Others attain fame at one bound, and win applause only to fade insensibly into insignificance. No trace of them would remain but for earnest students who gather up the remains of a departed glory and endeavour to restore them to life. Literary history is full of such mournful spectacles of the destiny of books lost, unappreciated, or forgotten. Solomon wrote a thousand parables and five hundred canticles; it is affirmed he penned treatises on plants and animals of every kind, and he himself complains that "of the making of books there is no end." His books are lost, as well as those of the Egyptians, Syrians, and other Orientals. What literary *débris* lies scattered on the soil of antiquity![1] "Saepe suuma ingenia in occulto latent!" cried Plautus two thousand years ago. Cherilos of Samos at the beginning of his *Persian Poems* lamented the misfortune of being born so late! Do we call to mind the famous Panyasis who was ranked among the foremost poets after Homer; or Philetas of Cos, whom Theocritus thought unequalled; or Euphorion, so highly esteemed by Virgil? From the time of Andronicus to the

[1] The library of the Ptolemys contained 700,000 volumes, which were destroyed by Cæsar at the taking of Alexandria. That of Pergamos comprising 200,000 different volumes, given by Antony to Cleopatra, disappeared at the same time as the Serapion, in the reign of Theodosius.

time of Horace the Romans did not cease to quote and sing the praises of Pacuvius on account of his learning, Accius for his power, Afranius for his comic talent, and Cecilius for his vigour and productiveness, placing them in a line with Plautus and Terence. They knew no other poets. Where among these Latin poets do we now find Saleius Bassus, Terentianus Maurus, Secundus Maternus, Romanus, Passienus, and the famous Lucius Varius, who won such laurels in their own day? Little of Varro remains though he wrote on almost every subject. And during the second imperial period how many a Martial and a Petronius of low rank are ignored in contrast with the only two Epicureans of the same name who survive!

But to proceed. We must hasten if we wish to avoid the wearisomeness of interminable enumeration. Omitting a vast period, we arrive at the fifteenth century when Erasmus holds undivided sway over the minds of men. His contemporaries invested him with world-wide renown, yet more than a half of his work is lost beyond hope of recovery. The interest in his polemical writings has died out; his educational treatises have long since been considered out of date, and are claimed by no country of modern Europe; likewise the most literary part of his work, the sense of which must be hunted up in the vocabulary of a language which for centuries has ceased to be a living tongue. Charron, who earned from his contemporaries the epithet of "divine," and Bodin, who ranked with the sages of antiquity, have singularly fallen from their high estate.

Who remembers Madelent, that excellent writer of Latin verse whom Naudé calls "our unique Horace"? Of what do the elegant Latin writings of the great Scotch humanist, George Buchanan, remind us, who was compared to Sallust and Virgil? Boisrobert and the Chevalier de Méré, who figured among the wits of the great age of Louis XIV. in France, were held to be great dispensers of fame. But who to-day knows the verse of the one or the playful writing of

the other? and how many read Ablancourt, Patru, or even the great Arnault himself? Posterity recks little of the illustrious dead, the poets and thinkers who beguiled the leisure of the great philosophical age, such as Gentil-Bernard, Colardeau, Boufflers, d'Argens, d'Holbach, la Motte-Houdard, and, nearer to our own time, Chênedollé, Fontanes, Arnault, Duclos, d'Alembert, Marmontel, whose names have well-nigh vanished because they were not synonymous with greatness or genius. Prévost wrote more than Voltaire; he is less read than Lesage. The publishers demanded that every novelist should write in the style of Prevost, as they had formerly required imitations of Saint-Evremond. His work is neither new nor attractive enough for us. But for the extraordinary success of a brief episode in a love story, *Manon Lescaut*, nothing but his name would remain. Alexandre Dumas was the author of six hundred volumes. In spite of so much wit, raciness, and imagination spread broadcast throughout his work, oblivion, like a vast sand-heap, almost covers this pyramid of books. How arduous would be our task if in the obituary list of letters we had to point out numberless petty reputations gained by deception or trickery! Many authors on the first appearance of their works were inclined to think them immortal, but they were the first, on re-reading them, to discover that they themselves no longer remembered them.

At the present time the greatest obstacle to a classification of authors, works, or theories is the extraordinary super-abundance and ever-increasing supply. Conditions never appeared less favourable to a just division of talents throughout the world. Criticism, too often cut down in the daily papers to the level of a mere prospectus, has lost its real authority. And the public in general, not any longer knowing to whom to turn in the crowd of those who bid for its favour, grows indifferent. On the other hand, the growth of the periodical has dealt a heavy blow at the book. It is the

same in England, France, Germany, and the United States : the magazine is the successful rival of the novel and collection of poems.[1] Everywhere the rotatory printing-press, rapid writing, and cheap editions prevail, and for the bulk of the population the newspaper, with its condensed information and its literature to match, appears to afford sufficient reading.

However, the number of books is very far from diminishing in view of the international market in the book trade ; indeed, the tide rises, as full and as laden as ever. We can no longer glance through all the books that appear, indeed we cannot even count them ; yet the movement on that account neither diminishes nor slackens. Each author goes his way, the poet writes verse, the novelist weaves his tale, the philosopher endeavours to impress the theories of the Ideal, the Good, the Beautiful, and the True on minds strange to the notion. The philologist is immersed in the study of languages, myths, and religions ; the critic, aggrieved in his heart at only exercising a thankless office, analyses, judges, cites, and propounds ; the journalist collects wholesale the sayings and opinions of the moment, and uninterruptedly the results of their labours will be relegated to those literary catacombs known as public libraries.

Authors are to be found everywhere ; men of letters and literary works swarm from one end of the globe to the other. Even Japan alone publishes twenty-five thousand volumes annually. Germany is not far behind it numerically ; England and France rank second ; Holland and Denmark, Norway and Switzerland third ; Poland and Sweden fourth, Italy fifth, and Russia last. Statistics on the matter are calculated to inspire the imagination with alarm.[2]

[1] In England alone the number of newspapers current in 1902 was 2,457, and of magazines 2,486, of which 503 were exclusively religious. In 1846 there were barely 200 magazines.

[2] It is estimated that some 75,000 are produced every year throughout the whole world, and it has been calculated approximately the circulation also throughout the world of existing works represents a total of

The past reveals to us countless and curious examples of literary intemperance. The six thousand treatises of Didymus, the six hundred tragi-comedies of Alexandre Hardy, the eighteen hundred plays in verse of Lope de Vega, the innumerable compilations of Belleforest, whose excessive facility of production led him to say that he had a mill for producing books, the fertility of Kotzebue, Krazewski, Gleich, Restif de la Bretonne, or Madame de Genlis, and many others, are well known to scholars. The Marquis de Foudras, a mediocre novelist of the nineteenth century, was afflicted with such productiveness that in the space of a year he issued some thirty volumes. On the other hand, during the classical period many writers boasted of their small output. The seventeenth century was a happy age, when talent was developed at leisure, and the author could live at ease with his thoughts, and "polish and refine his words." Study occupied and filled the young days of La Bruyère, and his mature years were not too long to fashion and perfect a single work, which, as was but just, procured him lasting fame. A Greek or Latin author could bequeath only a single page to posterity, but it remains to-day. At the present time the author's work has become a veritable trade destined to support him materially, and facility of production is one of the commonest occurrences. Since the time of Balzac, Dumas, and Eugène Sue, not to mention Ponson du Terrail, the works of French novelists alone would compose a pyramid of very considerable dimensions.[1] Modern authors produce on an average two volumes a year, some more. They have hardly seen the ink dry on the last page of one book before starting a fresh one, and do not always take the trouble of acquiring any fresh ideas. They carry on their

3,000,000,000; allowing for each new book an average edition of 1,000 copies, this alarming total would annually be increased by 75,000,000.

[1] Among contemporary writers who would swell the list, we may mention the Hungarian novelist, Jokai, whose writings are multitudinous, the powerful Czech author, Vrchlicky, and the no less vigorous Belgian, Camille Lemonnier.

writing with the mechanical regularity of a Government official.

Add to these the thousands upon thousands of volumes or small works which are called forth by political or social exigencies, by the need for attracting attention, or out of the pure snobbishness of a crowd of authors without a reading public. These have, perhaps, been thrust into the career by force of circumstances, by relatives or friends, occasionally also by the difficulty of making any choice of a vocation, or, more rarely still, by lofty aspirations or genuine aptitude. Some idea of the overplus of literary work may then be obtained. We may well ask what is the destiny of so much printed matter.

In reality, the intellectual world is terribly overstocked. The archives of the past refuse to harbour the numbers of pamphlets which aim at being works of lasting value. The human brain, which we endeavour to overload with impressions it ill retains, has not grown in proportion to the indefinite increase in literary output. History should be a rapid summary, yet each day it becomes weighted with detail ; hence it has neither the time nor the space necessary to say all it would say, nor to preserve all it would see preserved. Therefore history must confine itself in its brief survey to the most salient points, the most important names, and the most compendious *résumés ;* its work is that of pruning, lopping, cutting, and letting fall an enormous amount of superfluous matter.

Yet, as we have already noticed, this in no wise lessens the contributions of individuals, whose share of the sum total of the work may be confined to the mere expression of a fact or an idea. Hence spring the tracing of an intellectual current, the indication of an influence, the exact details of a well-marked effort, some unit of comparison, or some data which may furnish the substance and basis of an historical work. Though so many reputations only last the lifetime of

an author, and so many isolated notions are lost to sight in the flood of surrounding thought, yet the same cannot be said of the continuous work to which they have individually contributed, namely, the building up, from century to century, of a varied and complex whole. Each literary worker adds an echo, feeble though it may be, to the thousand resounding voices which, heard from a thousand different quarters, blend in an indistinct murmur. Each, for his part, helps in establishing the average character of his epoch, in giving a bias to ideas and current sentiments, and in assigning to his time that significant mark or formula by which future ages shall distinguish it.

II

GENERAL FACTS—SIMILAR FEATURES FOUND IN ALL LITERARY EPOCHS

Every literary epoch has its own physiognomy. "At certain times," says Taine, "an original aspect of mind appears whence spring a philosophy, a literature, an art, a science, and thought, having been reinspired, a slow and infallible change takes place in all human activity." And he further adds that when this art has revealed all its treasures, this philosophy all its theories, this science all its discoveries, they cease, and a new spirit arises and takes the place of the former one.

Or we may also observe passing currents, series of systematic imitations which are in vogue for a time and are the result of an established fashion. Hence the seventeenth century in France appears to us quite in keeping with its slavish imitation of classical models in poetry, a characteristic that was further complicated by its infatuation for Spanish and Italian taste. In the eighteenth century all literature is tinged with the new philosophy; the poet, the dramatic author, as well as the historian, the philologist, or

the rhetorician, all adopt the prevalent note,[1] and it would seem that all their works were formed on the same model.

To whatever time we go back, whether to the series of mystic conceptions known as the Alexandrian and the Christian period, or to the series of mythological fables which we find at a very early point in the history of India, Greece, and Germany, or whether we revert to the spontaneous creations of the Renaissance, the Classical Age, or the immense intellectual activity which succeeded the Romantic movement, we find in every instance an all-prevailing idea the variations of which reflect the history of contemporary men and works.

Let us take, for example, the Middle Ages, when an innumerable succession of "*chansons de gestes*," of "*fabliaux*," and "*lais*," were produced almost identical in form in France, Italy, Spain, Germany, and England, a fact which serves to confirm the profound underlying unity of Western nations.

During the Renaissance we see the rise of artistic and poetic genius in Italy, whence it spread to Spain, and with different characteristics was transplanted to England and France, thus assuring independence of thought and spreading the seeds of learning. In the case of Malherbe and Dryden we find the oratorical spirit of the seventeenth century on to which the philosophical spirit of the eighteenth was to be grafted. After two centuries this spirit was destined to decline, having borne all its fruits and refined Europe, and

[1] To go from the general to the particular, it is a law of all ages that when poets of immortal or merely ephemeral fame have been the admiration of their day, they leave such an impress on the public mind that it ever after remains tinged therewith. Every age has its poem or novel which engenders numerous imitations, as was the case in the sixteenth century with Guarini's *Arcadia*, Montemayor's *Diana*, and d'Urfé's *Astrée;* so in the seventeenth with Mlle. de Scudéry's *Clélie*, in the eighteenth with Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, or Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe*, and the epoch-making *Werther* of Goethe, which fascinated all Europe ; finally in the nineteenth century Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, and perhaps in the twentieth century the *Quo Vadis* of Sienkiewicz, which fostered the production of quite a host of historical novels.

having incidentally been instrumental in producing the French Revolution. In like manner the German philosophical spirit, which made its appearance at the end of the eighteenth century, has introduced a new tone, created a new theology and system of metaphysics, a new literature and science of language, putting fresh life into modern thought, and making its powerful influence felt in the realm of science. Finally we see the complex nineteenth century change from Classicism to Romanticism, from the Romanticists to the Parnassians and the " Plastic " School, from the lovers of art for art's sake to the ardent disciples of realism and impressionism, from the cult of the ancients to the glorification of the leaders of the most modern schools, from the Greeks to the Germans, and from the Germans to the Scandinavians.

All these works of such very varied origin amalgamate and coincide on essential points in which the experiences of the human heart and mind concur. The collection of facts and the grouping of ideas result, which form the common heritage of humanity ; the psychological elements, too, on which they depend constitute the general causes of the operations of the intelligence without distinction of date or place.

Just as man has a dual nature, mind and matter, soul and body, so there are two literatures, two histories, two philosophies—the history, literature and philosophy of material fact, and the hidden history, literature and philosophy of the intellect.

Every literary age has its two great schools—the one manifestly intellectual, the other essentially of the senses and nature. Throughout the ages we see them trembling in the balance according to their respective predominance for the time being, reproducing themselves with an almost infallible regularity, and finding their level far less owing to the contrasting qualities of the representative works than to the perpetual vacillation of public taste and opinion.[1]

[1] The evolution of thought proceeds on similar lines with historical

The sum total of the movement of civilisations has been justly represented as the effect of a permanent force which, without changing its nature, varies its work at every moment, and modifying the circumstances under which it acts, always returns to its own proper sphere. We should find an ancient people very far removed from modern nations even if at first sight there appeared a close resemblance between them. With their enormous past behind them, their lengthy dynasties and their numerous religions and languages, India and Egypt would present a chaos of discordances when judged by the standard of our ideas and our world. Yet men in recent times have penetrated to their innermost depths, and in many respects a very close union has been shown to exist between this period, even extending beyond antiquity and our own time. The historic ages to which we can go back by the aid of the constructive work of philology bear witness to the notion of an intimate link with the past throughout the whole course of time. They differ but little from succeeding ages in moral essentials, the family circle, the affections of the human heart, the primordial notions of work, justice, and right.

Certain thoughts and conclusions seem to spring naturally from the domain of facts, and such thoughts are common to every epoch. Before Fénelon, Cicero had used the testimonies of nature from which to deduce philosophical truths, which have remained as specious to-day as they were then. Before Cicero even Aristotle had had recourse to the same plausible arguments founded on the marvellous harmony of the laws of the universe. The history of letters is full of such analogies. For example, what author could ever think, feel, or write apart from such fundamental ideas of all history and all poetry as love, death, and war?

evolution. The logical procedure of humanity consists in incessantly proposing a new idea in place of an old, hence it is sufficient to analyse the prevailing influence of the moment in order almost with certainty to grasp by its antithesis what will be the guiding principle of the ensuing period.

III

THE LOFTY ASPIRATIONS COMMON TO ALL TIMES AND ALL PEOPLES

The same character of universality belongs to a certain number of ideas and sentiments which permeate all poetry, fiction, novels, or portrayal of manners irrespective of origin or epoch. We may, for example, cite the opposition of the real and the ideal, the inner capacity for revolt of those minds which are in conflict with the harshnesses of destiny, the desire for change which ensues and the uneasy or dissatisfied search after a better state of things, and an ardent wish to combat the injustices of fate and the imperfections of society.

It would be as invidious to attempt to assign these permanent inspirations as the exclusive privilege of this or that portion of territory, as it would be unreasonable to pretend to attribute each breath of heaven to a special country, forbidding it to waft its sweetness elsewhere, or to imagine that we can restrict to the frontiers of a single people the jealous ownership of their writers of talent, who belong, as a matter of fact, to the whole world. It has been asserted a hundred times, to cite only these as an example, that Æschylus, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Cervantes are the compatriots of all men. By the light which they threw over time and space, petty divisions and distinctions in the realm of thought vanish.

The cosmopolitan nature of genius, uniting as it does the whole immense human family by one bond of emotion, has never been better understood than to-day. It is because, in fact, a narrower and less human understanding would be in diametric contradiction with the spirit of an age when civilisations tend increasingly and without cessation to mutually influence each other to a greater degree. This largeness of view is impressed on all minds, and applies not only in its entirety to a select group of men whose fame has spread

throughout the world, but to the large body of poets or artists, all stirred by the same inspiration, despite the accidental differences of birth.

It has been noticed above that many ancient or modern peoples, judged *à priori* to be very different, are found to possess genuine affinity of soul and to have experienced and given vent to the same passions even as they have felt the same thirst for the ideal and the unattainable. It is a literary truth which has passed into an axiom, so often has it been repeated, that there are only a limited number of dramatic situations and romantic experiences. Hence the general ideas which ancient and modern nations have at their disposal as a common ground might be summed up in a brief space, and the work of the human imagination always commences as an imitation of the life of which it is in some degree a reflection.[1]

The variety of form alone is infinite and perpetually changing in order to correspond to the prodigious diversity of talents and mental moulds.

In this sense we might say that just as every terrestrial zone has its particular vegetation and form of culture as regards nature's gifts, so it is with artistic production.

But amidst all these sections of thinking humanity to whom shall we award the prize? Whom shall we single out incontestably for pre-eminence when all claim it as the object of an eternal struggle? This is a difficult question and one deserving attention.

IV

THE CONTRIBUTION OF EACH NATION TO THE UNIVERSAL STOCK GIVES TO NONE ABSOLUTE SUPREMACY

Self-love, being the fundamental motive of human life, is

[1] "Poetry, like the sea, always says what it has to say, and then begins again with that calm majesty and inexhaustible variety which only belongs to unity."—VICTOR HUGO.

not lost sight of when we deal with large numbers of individuals. Its power is felt in vast combinations as well as in regard to a single individual or a family, a single city or province, and this quality grows and spreads in an arbitrary form becoming the vanity of the small town, the nation, or the mother-country.

Every nation has its share of vanity, which inclines it to attribute to itself qualities which it denies its neighbours. Every city and region of the globe has its own particular boast; each citizen receives by reflection in his own person a share of the general pride. As with individuals, so it is with nations which they compose. No nation will yield to its rival in patriotic pride, nor in the ardour with which it sets forth its claim to a doubtful supremacy.

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance British pride revealed with as much stubbornness as to-day the conviction of its invariable and indomitable nationality. Unhesitatingly the Englishmen of that day thought themselves the princes of the human race, and felt a supreme pity for those who lived beyond the sea, the papists and serfs, and such inferior creatures as had not, like themselves, the control of their own persons or the government of their own parish. The Scotch, proud of their royal extraction, claimed to be the most subtle dialecticians in the world.[1] The French reserved to themselves an indisputable superiority in respect of the polish of their manners and their literary supremacy. The Germans boasted of having completely fathomed the occult sciences. The mere thought of her nobility was sufficient for Venice. "Were ever people more vain than the inhabitants of Siena?" cries Dante in the *Inferno*, "not even the French." The Romans rested with supreme content on the laurels of their ancestors, and Greece, when reduced to a state of weakness, looked back with pride to the past glories of her great men as grounds for her claim to be in perpetuity the mother of literature. Italy had not as

[1] We owe to the Scotch experimental philosophy and political economy.

yet renounced the sceptre of eloquence with which she believed herself invested since the time of Cicero and Hortensius, and continued to treat the rest of Europe as barbarian. The Jews were looking for their Messiah with the same unshakable confidence as in the time of their prophet Daniel. The Turks, "the only true believers," poured their scorn on the whole body of Christians ; and in the extreme East the Chinese continued to hold aloof from the rest of mankind. They had, it was said, maps on which the Celestial Empire was represented in the centre like a vast continent, and round it the rest of the earth floated in indistinct lines, similarly portrayed as the unknown regions of Africa or Baffin's Bay by a European engraver. Man's temperament has hardly changed, though by the force of events broader views have penetrated the mind concerning the respective value of civilisations, and frontier prejudices tend to disappear. The French have retained a certain innate propensity for personal admiration. A Frenchman practically thinks to-day, as yesterday, that wit is an exclusively Gallic quality and, with his former illusions intact, that Paris is the "*Ville Lumière*," the one city, eye of the world, sanctuary of progress, source of all light and inspiration, just as if the same thing could not be said of London, Rome, Berlin, Vienna, or Stockholm. The Italian never feels he has spoken enough about "the national spirit," nor in sufficiently varied tones, and when he does treat of other subjects in speaking or writing, one may be fairly certain that it is finally to culminate in the glorification of the patriotic point of view or in the talent of his race. The German, carried away by the success of his country's arms, does not cease to exalt German greatness and fidelity.

It is a sign of a miserable narrowness of mind if, because one loves one particular study, one art, or one people, one must disparage another ; and it is a singular illusion to regard the country of one's birth as the very centre of the world. In reality the moral supremacy of a nation can in no sense

be hereditary. Every centre of civilisation has had its hour of brilliance, more or less lasting and distinguished. Athens at the time of Pericles, Rome at the time of Augustus, enjoyed a period of unrivalled distinction. Bagdad under the Abbassides was the metropolis of science. In the glorious days of the Renaissance a wonderful bourgeoning was evident, and an interval of peace and progress had secured for Italy a species of intellectual dictatorship. She triumphed in letters, science, and art. Her supremacy extended equally into the realm of industry, finance, diplomacy, and the intellectual aspect of government. From England to Moscow, and from Flanders to Egypt, her ascendancy levied a tribute on all countries. Italy, since the days of the Roman Empire, had never known such a profound and far-reaching influence. On the other hand, England had her great Elizabethan period, which is second to none as regards the rich wealth and variety of production and the power and spontaneity of talent, not even to the age of Pericles or Augustus, of Leo X. or Louis XIV. From the end of the eighteenth century to about 1820 Germany was the intellectual head of Europe with Goethe, Schiller, Herder, and Fichte. On more than one occasion France had been supreme in Europe, namely, in the twelfth, thirteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, not to speak of her brilliant Restoration period.

We may ask where we are to find the noblest and most complete image of the human mind. Should we seek it in Ancient Greece, among that active race, endowed with a bold and poetic imagination, ready for all emergencies, for peace as for war, for philosophy as for arts, and which for ten centuries led the civilisation of the world ; or in France during her most brilliant period of culture, when she subordinated all faculties to the rule of reason ? Shall we not rather seek it in England, whose literature reveals five consecutive centuries of development, and such a long and brilliant list of thinkers, historians, philosophers, dramatists,

and novelists? Have not the Spain of Cervantes and Calderon, and Germany with her sudden and prodigious development of genius, as genuine claims to bring forward in this rivalry as the rest? But this very rivalry proves that there is no instance of absolute or final superiority.

To discuss the respective claims of the ancients and the moderns would be but to rekindle old disputes and to lose ourselves, after the example of Perrault and Lamotte, in vain polemics. It would also be indicative of some temerity to select one or other of the nations of Europe to whom to assign the sceptre of literary authority, each having had, as we have already shown, its period of decided influence, and each having the right of proclaiming its famous names and brilliant literary epochs.

At most we could show that if any nation has been credited with a continued influence outside its frontiers, it would seem that at least in the past this may be said of the French people, and that the latter may be accorded the first place for the duration, frequency, and extent of its conquests.[1]

[1] By way of historical justification we shall rapidly review the effects and also the vagaries of this force of international expansion.

All epic poetry in the Middle Ages except among the Slavs emanated from the rough models of French poems of this class. Muratori tells us that in the thirteenth century people assembled in the market-places of the towns of Italy to sing the deeds of Roland and Oliver. A hundred learned writers have followed the migrations of the Carlovingian tales in Spain, England and the Low Countries, and among the Scandinavians, and found them everywhere well received and imitated. To France had indeed fallen, during this intermediate period, the greater share of the intellectual direction of Europe. The language of her troubadours and trouvères spread as far as the renown of her arms. In the time of the Norman Conquest and the Crusades we see the victorious banners floating everywhere. Certain precocious grace of manner and the capacity for expansion of a vigorous youth were added to the advantages obtained by policy, alliance, victories, and trade, as well as other means for increasing her fame and assuring her pre-eminence. Gervais of Tilbury, an old English writer, relates that before the invasion of the Normans, during the reign of Edward the Confessor, the Anglo-Saxons used to send their sons to France to learn the profession of arms and to lose some of the roughness of their native speech.

But for testimonies of this sort, based directly on facts, we should meet with almost insurmountable difficulties if we

In the wake of the barons who, at the call of Peter the Hermit, St. Bernard, and Foulques de Neuilly, went away to fight and die for the sake of redeeming an empty sepulchre, the French language spread to the East, including Jerusalem, Constantinople, and the whole of Greece, and with such success that, according to a contemporary chronicler, at the end of the twelfth century it was heard in the Morea, the "Duchy of Athens," as readily as in Paris. At this period, too, it had been imposed already for more than a hundred years on the English, owing to the action of William of Normandy, as the medium of expression of their laws, and England being subdued, it had passed thence to Scotland. At the same time too, Robert Guiscard, another invader from Neustria, had transplanted French to Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily. In 1094 the first Portuguese count, Henry of Burgundy, who ascended the throne of Lusitania, spoke French. A double channel brought the language into Spain, namely, Navarre and Pampeluna were given in 1234 to Thibaut IV., Count of Champagne, while Catalonia, before it was united to the kingdom of Aragon in 1258, had never ceased from the time of Louis the Debonnair to depend on the kings of France. In the fourteenth century French was the language used in the drawing up of charters. Even Germany could not escape the French ascendancy ; it must have been known and understood soon after its introduction, for the Council of Mayence of 847 introduced it in the pulpit, and in another Council held at Mousson in 995, composed of German prelates, Aimon, Bishop of Verdun, pronounced his discourse in French. By dint of numerous translations or imitations of the "*chansons de gestes*," the poetical romances of the Round Table were introduced to Germany. Peter III., King of Aragon, and Frederick II., King of Sicily, having taken arms against France and the Holy See, celebrated their exploits in Provençal verse. From one end to the other of the Italian peninsula the trouvères and troubadours were as celebrated in the provinces which had remained free as in the kingdom of Naples, which was governed by the successors of Robert Guiscard, and at the end of the thirteenth century by Charles of Anjou. St. Francis of Assisi, *il glorioso poverello di Christo*, was wont to sing French chants as he walked along the roads. Tuscany was full of Italians, who composed verse in the dialect of Southern France to delight the lords and ladies. Dante was a disciple of the Provençal poets as well as a Fridrich von Hausen and Walther von de Vogelweide. In order that this superiority should be attributed to the French language by such wide-spread and common consent among foreign nations, it was essential that it should possess certain claims which English, Spanish, or Italian could not as yet put forth. Gervais of Tilbury and Brunetto Latini, among others, have testified to this having been the case.

With the Renaissance and the Pleiad the varied rhythms which served

wished to determine with entire assurance and without appeal to which nation as a collective individuality the

as models for the poets of Spain, Italy, and England spread from France to the rest of Europe. We know how contagious was the admiration produced by the masterpieces of the great classical period. When Voltaire was enthroned the Encyclopedists inherited the sovereignty of the poets. The gratitude of the human race was accorded to polemical writers, historians, and philosophers, who from Paris as centre spread abroad throughout the world the ideas of moral emancipation, tolerance, and pity. A consequence of French expansion was seen very markedly then in several celebrated productions of England and Italy, and this counterstroke was so rapid and active as to produce a curious subject of study—the ideas of one nation acting on the institutions of other States before influencing its own, and the speculative genius of its authors increasing the eloquence of free nations before France herself had a national assembly. The use of the language of Voltaire, being introduced to Poland by King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, had become so widespread in all classes of Polish society that only French was spoken, read, and written. Everywhere French novels had taken the place of Polish books, which lay neglected on the library shelves. Towards the end of the eighteenth century another literature, namely, that of Sweden, had become so impregnated with French, that it had to draw from Germany in order to become itself once more. Finally, at the beginning of the Romantic movement, the most distinguished literary men of England and Germany, Walter Scott, Southey, Görres, Müller, and Lachmann, refreshed their national genius at French and Celtic sources.

We might multiply examples of the extraordinary influence which France has exercised over foreign nations even up to more recent times.

But to be just, we must add that if she has given much she has also received a great deal. Sometimes she yielded to a chance infatuation to follow in the steps of her neighbours ; sometimes, coming under a nobler inspiration, she appropriated to herself with great advantage certain fruitful elements. At the period when she adored Ronsard she blindly gave herself up to the pedantic study of the ancients. With equal passion she next threw herself into a slavish imitation of the taste of declining Italy, subsequently of Spain, which was likewise on the wane. The first half of the seventeenth century had received the divine spark from the land of the *romancero*. From Scarron to Corneille we can hardly find a single writer who does not reveal Spanish influence ; Castilian affectation and the false wit of the school of Gongora spoilt a whole generation of authors. Moreover, Rome of the classical period had imposed on the poets of the reign of Louis XIV. the literary code of Horace, and set up Lucan as their model. Dramatic authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries drew their materials largely from ancient sources, and adapted Greek or Latin forms to their masterpiece. Under Voltaire's

greatest number of the essential features of civilisation belong.

An equal reserve is imposed in matters philological where the claims of the various nations are not less strongly marked. Inquire of a Frenchman. He will be full of enthusiasm, and firmly convinced as to the prerogatives of that matchless language of Montaigne, Pascal, Molière, and Voltaire, which has expressed so many charming as well as profound things, and which is, above all, the essence of what is natural, humorous, witty, and which has been to the world a veritable apostle of good nature and common sense. Ask a German. He will only have to marshal his regiments of compound words in battle array to be convinced that he possesses the most perfect, solid, and elastic instrument of thought and sentiment. Or again, ask a Russian. He will assure you that among the inhabitants of Moscow and St. Petersburg who speak several languages, there is no doubt that of all European languages the Russian is the richest, with its marvellous conciseness, which neither excludes variety, clearness, nor energy. It is interesting to hear in what tones Michael Lomonossoff spoke to his compatriots of the eighteenth century, who, of course, did not as yet know of Tolstoi or Tourguenieff. He says: "Charles V., Emperor of Germany, was accustomed to say that he worshipped God in Spanish, spoke French to his friends, German to his

rule France became somewhat influenced by England, all the time retaining her own individuality in order to impose it on the rest of Europe. While she exercised a considerable influence abroad she borrowed much from foreign nations and only enhanced their value and power by reproducing them. During the Revolution sciences, arts, manners, and institutions assumed a Greek tone. At the beginning of the nineteenth century France was languishing and exhausted on her literary side. Having drained dry all the sources of national inspiration, she was dying for lack of nourishment. Foreign supplies were, however, forthcoming in time. France followed the English and German Romantic School, and gained therefrom fresh life. Finally, at the end of the last century we find successive periods of very marked foreign imitation, notably of German, English, Russian, and Norwegian ideas.

enemies, and Italian to women. But had he known Russian he would certainly have added that that can be spoken to everybody. For he would have found in it the nobleness of Spanish, the vivacity of French, the force of German, the delicacy of Italian, and further the wealth and picturesque conciseness of Greek and Latin."

As a matter of fact the human mind is everywhere ; it is not the exclusive property of the North or of the South. It is to be found even in those dialects which have not succeeded in becoming languages, but which are nevertheless capable of furnishing gems of thought. English has its grammatical simplicity, its precise brevity, although rather unadorned in certain respects, not to say wanting in forms. German has its infinite profusion of terms, its extraordinary facility for creating words which more than compensates it for its instability, its excess of choice of order, of inversions and circumlocution of every kind which hamper its progress.[1] Italian has its musical sweetness when this sweetness does not degenerate into languid feebleness, lacking in character. Spanish has its warm tints, its sonorous harmony, when this sonority is not exaggerated to such a degree as to become a mere empty jingle of words.

The French language has not at its disposal the inexhaustible wealth of the Slav and Teutonic tongues. Nevertheless it is capable of rendering all sounds. Whether it expands in a lengthy phrase full of brilliance and weight, or whether it is compressed and condensed into short, rapid touches, it possesses universally recognised qualities of suppleness and lucidity. As an instrument of intercourse or oratory it lends itself admirably to the varied elements of conversation. It is like speech itself, rapid and infectious.

[1] Let us say in passing that in the opinion of the German people the ruggedness of their language has been much exaggerated abroad, and that a careful diction succeeds in softening it in districts and among people who speak it correctly. We know how well the language modulates to musical rhythm and poetry, and assumes a genuine harmony according to the way in which it is pronounced.

It does not tend to exaggerate individual differences by separating them; it may rather be reproached with a too great concentration. It does not segregate, but binds together by the ready and immediate communication of the idea.

The German language, too verbose and overladen with abundance of words, has not the easy turns and elegant concision of its rival. It hovers round a thought, slow and undecided, but is on the other hand more capable of abstraction and more ready also in questions of philosophy to clothe pure idealities in such transparent and diaphanous dress as to permit of our discerning the most delicate shades of meaning or the slightest subtleties. The Germans are the best translators in the world by the qualities and very defects of their language,[1] so easy to break up into its component parts and so ready to combine into an infinite variety of expressions owing to its numerous alternative forms.[2]

V

ORIENTAL IMAGINATION AND GREEK GENIUS

The essential condition of thoroughly investigating the respective merits of literatures would consist in making a complete abstraction of the influences of early education, language, and nationality. We could only succeed in determining in a sufficiently accurate manner the proportionate contribution and exact share of each people to the common stock of the world by studying their particular

[1] "German, with its supple form and faculty for creating words by agglutination, and the slowness of its tortuous phrases, furnishes modern thought with an elastic, convenient and pliable instrument of expression even if a somewhat inconsistent one."—GABRIEL HANOTAUX.

[2] To them were due the first translations of Homer and Shakespeare. It is well known that their translations of Oriental poetry are masterpieces and their writers of the first rank, Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Tieck, and the brothers Schlegel, did not disdain the subsidiary work of translation.

characteristics, their sources of inspiration, the qualities and defects which constitute their racial characters and typical tradition, their innate and persistent tendencies, and finally the total results which they have individually furnished the history of ideas. Such is the conscientious and disinterested method of investigation which we must pursue. But the task is too complex and too perilous for us to assume all the responsibility. We shall, therefore, merely sketch a summary survey of the character of the chief ancient and modern literatures.[1]

If we begin this comparison by a simple glance at the productions of the East in general, we shall note at once that the peoples of this part of the world manifested a more spontaneous taste for poetry than Western nations. Besides the facilities which certain of the languages of Asia offered by their harmony and their wealth of words and synonyms, these peoples were instinctively drawn to it by the inspiration of great natural beauties, in sight of which their dreams and passions were developed. In such regions of intense natural brilliance descriptions need only to be accurate to appear very highly coloured. But under the effect of a temperature which, in nearly all regions, is overpowering, the imagination is apt to grow enervated, losing its qualities of vigour, close connection or ready sequence of ideas which are the glory of great European literatures. This energetic faculty, which is the permanent mark of the works of Northern and Western literatures, is rarely seen among the Persians, except in fragments of epics or a few heroic poems.

[1] It should be noted that we do not here attempt any sort of absolute statement in the order of comparison, knowing that ethnographical analysis is fundamentally chimerical in the matter of the psychology of the intellect. Seeing that no race is pure and that no race is more mixed than the so-called Latin race, consisting as it does of French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and other elements, it is best to admit that the characteristic mark of each people is a notion or an ideal elaborated by the sum total of many generations from which its integral civilisation has been gradually evolved.

Where such exists we find tenderness, delicacy, and the subtler faculties of the soul developed to a very high degree.

Ancient Greece occupies the front rank in our traditional admiration. It was she that gave an impetus to the most lofty ideas and the most important principles which constitute the intellectual patrimony of the world. She denotes the advent of reason, and liberty, and it was she that built up a code of morals and the notion of eternal truth on the basis of this reason brought into line with the natural and social aims of the citizens. Learning, that is to say, true philosophy, first saw light in the land of Aristotle and Plato. Although very much restricted in the range of its inventions, Greek art has never wearied the enthusiasm of its imitators.

Such are the magnificent titles of Greece and the immense debt [1] which the modern world has contracted towards this most unalloyed and most compact portion of the old world.

The halo of antique glory will always reveal the early efforts at European civilisation with the illusions of distance. Let it dazzle our thoughts during the present study—that is not asking too much; yet we must beware of being blinded by, whilst we admire, the brilliance. The number of sentiments, of subjects of inspiration or emotion which were within the reach of the minds of classical times, were very limited in comparison with our own time. The theatre in olden times seems to have been one prolonged wail against an inevitable fate which bore down on the destiny of men. The modern stage combines and opposes all the passions, characters, and forms of life. The resources of thought have enormously increased with the diversity of nations and the ever-growing number of peoples who appreciate intellectual pleasures. From the point of view of social questions, the new ages have only progressed on the former periods. How very far preferable is the fate of modern nations to that of

[1] "Athens had no glory or even pleasure which did not constitute a benefit for future generations, and which is even for us an immortal inheritance" (Ernest Havet, *Christianity and its Origins*, vol. i. p. 59).

the heroic peoples whose immortal tradition of art and poetry has only revealed its nobler aspects to a succession of generations who see the past in a mirage! If we need convincing we have only to recall the imperfection of their public morality, the injustice of their laws, which sanctioned slavery, the barbaric nature of their dealings with one another, the shamelessness and sometimes the cruelty of their religious rites, their relatively profound ignorance of physical, industrial, theoretical and practical notions which are to-day widespread from the extremities of Europe to those of America, and which ensure ease and security on all hands, crowning the benefits which a better code of morals, more enlightened governments, and more salutary institutions assure to mankind.

VI

INTELLECTUAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHIEF PEOPLES AND NATIONAL TEMPERAMENTS

The French people are especially appreciative of noble linguistic style. It is long since Julius Cæsar remarked that the Gauls had a taste for fighting and for language. As a nation the French stand in the front rank for rhetoric and prose-writing; written eloquence, if we may be permitted the term, is the chief quality of their literature. By unanimous consent of the best judges France is the country where prose seems to have attained the highest and best sustained degree of brilliance, either on account of certain innate and well-marked qualities of reason, logic, clearness, or by a habit, dear to writers, and more systematic also, of seeking stylistic beauties properly so called, even in the current forms of the language, and apart from the value of the subject-matter itself. England, Germany, Italy, and Spain are proud of possessing poets equal or superior to those of France. They cannot muster so numerous a throng

of prose-writers of the first rank. The land of Shakespeare will claim Francis Bacon, Addison, Swift, Macaulay, Edmund Burke, and Newman ;[1] that of Dante may cite Machiavelli ; Spain may cite Cervantes ; Germany possesses Lessing, Schiller, Goethe, and their eminent contemporaries, philosophers, classical in form, such as Fichte and Jacobi. France, as Victor Cousin remarked, could easily enumerate twenty prose-writers of genius—Froissart, Rabelais, Montaigne, Descartes, Pascal, Molière, La Rochefoucald, Cardinal de Retz, La Bruyère, Malebranche, Bossuet, Fénelon, Bourdaloue, Mme. de Sévigné, Saint Simon, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Jean Jacques, Rousseau, Buffon, and Chateaubriand, not to mention many other who would be in the front rank elsewhere, such as Commines, Amyot, Calvin, François de Sales, Guez de Balzac, Arnauld, Nicole, Fléchier, Massillon, Fleury, Mme. de Maintenon, Saint Evrémond, Fontenelle, Vauvenargues, Diderot, Lesage, Lamennais, Augustin Thierry, George Sand, Prosper Mérimée, and Renan. I am omitting the technical and individual language of Honoré de Balzac and his followers, of Flaubert and the brothers de Goncourt, those indefatigable connoisseurs of modern writing, those ardent enthusiasts for a complicated and learned style, full of subtle shades and far-fetched expressions. Such as these find kindred spirits among the Russian novelists of the same school, the followers of Dostoiewski and Tolstoi. They are masters and not models. If not for its perfect harmony, at any rate for its abundance and variety, French classical prose has no match except the Greek prose of the golden age of antiquity, as seen in the works of Demosthenes and Herodotus.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of French language and literature is their faculty of expansion and their widespread influence. The spirit of proselytism is no stranger to them. How many ideas that have seen the light

[1] Cardinal Newman, the chief of religious men of letters in his native land, has been called the English Fénelon.

in Paris have travelled round the world! The French nation boasts of possessing, in a high degree, the gifts of sociability and communicativeness; indeed the latter quality has, perhaps, been extolled to excess. The French, relying too much on their historic and artistic past and proud of having led or ruled Europe at the time when they enjoyed to the full their advantages of power and charm, have sometimes shown an excessive complaisance in depending on their past glories to bring them honour at the present, reckoning it as an unattackable prerogative. Their ascendancy in Europe is none the less quite beyond dispute.

French thought often lacks certain qualities of originality and picturesqueness which are very noticeable in the literatures of the North. Though the French mind may have appeared on more than one occasion jealous in bearing off the palm in the matter of vagaries in competition with German exaggeration or British eccentricities, yet a fantastic imagination is not a French quality. Laborious and extravagant imitations of foreign works, in which the whimsicalness is manifestly far-fetched, and in which reality disappears in view of improbability, often without charm or poetry, have never appealed otherwise than as a very imperfect copy of the original.

Taste, as we have said, is an essentially French faculty. Yet we must admit with Dollfus that it is not a creative quality. The sources of inspiration, too, have been opened more freely for other nations than the French. France, having sought and found in the external world an outlet for her spontaneity, holds hardly even the second place in purely idealistic arts; in painting, in spite of the incontestably superior talent of her modern schools, she is behind the great masters of the Renaissance. She is inferior to Germany and Italy in music, and to Germany also in lofty philosophical ideals. If the nineteenth century had not given her Victor Hugo, she would lag behind England in lyrical productions.

To sum up, if France has let herself be excelled by Italy

in arts, the same may be said of her inferiority to England in the matter of political institutions, and to Germany in historical lore and criticism. Perhaps in many respects other countries were temporarily superior to her. Her undeniable strength and virtue has lain especially in her importance as a factor to be reckoned with abroad; her foreign influence is seen at every step of her past history. In addition the different periods of her development have borne witness to exceptional resources, great suppleness and progress, and no one doubts that she has furnished the best models of that elaborate medium of literature—the language of reason, embellished by art and eloquence.

The even balance of all the great mental faculties so admirably observed in the most talented French writers of the seventeenth century is rarely to be found in foreign literatures which possess other merits and charms.

France and Germany, however strongly opposed to each other by political antagonism, are united and form a complement to one another, whether willingly or no, owing to the importance and far-reaching nature of their work as civilising agents.

The Germans, with their readiness to welcome gladly foreign ideas and influences, have never been ignorant of important events, whether of a social or intellectual nature, which have taken place among their neighbours; indeed, they are endowed by nature with a strongly marked international sense. The notion of "fatherland" is very dear to them, but they readily adopt the ideas of other nations, being full of the desire to increase their own store with all that is good or useful among other peoples; they make of them their study, their pleasure, and their profit. It is quite a characteristic German passion to translate and imitate everything.

The French, on the contrary, are much slower in doing justice to the intellectual merits of their rivals, and especially as regards the German language and schools of thought.

Before Mdme. Staël rendered her compatriots the inestimable service of revealing to them Germany in the most brilliant phase of her sudden and powerful development, critics were to be found who seriously posed the question as to whether a man of intelligence could speak German! Such a superficial as well as flagrant injustice made this race of thinkers come to be considered as the "porters of literature," because the greatest number of critical and learned works are to be found in Germany. But this state of things was probably due to their unwearying perseverance, their search for clear ideas often without other ends in view than the disinterested love of truth, and their well-developed faculty of compilation as well as their profound learning.

Historical and scientific criticism as understood by Wolf, Niebuhr, and Mommsen has been the glory and, for a considerable time, almost the monopoly of Germany. Hence, as Ernest Renan showed, the noblest method of understanding science in its relations to philosophy, esthetics, and religion is not, to be exact, the fruit of the French mind. Further, it must be admitted that philosophy has too often in France been a kind of abstract study segregated from the knowledge of facts and history; learning, too, has been a pastime for the leisured, religion a dogma accepted on the faith of the Church, and one with which the individual conscience is not concerned. The unity of the higher life of man, the religious value of need which forces him to inquire into the secret of things, have in general been better understood and more thoroughly examined in Germany than in France. Germany, let us admit it, is not only the classical soil of history in all its branches, but pre-eminently the realm of philosophic abstraction. It might have been said of her, before the passion for military greatness had swallowed up her idealistic ambitions, that she was the India of Europe, vast, vague, with as many and varied aspects as her god, the Proteus of pantheism.

It is true that certain German authors of the nineteenth century, including Louis Knappe, desirous of proving that the notion of the real is no more foreign to the German mind than pure abstraction, wished to contest the title of philosophical nation as applied to Germany. But this attempt at reaction against the extreme idealism of the German character cannot undermine a judgment formed on such abundant proof, especially if we reflect that Germany has, perhaps, in a very short space of time, produced as many metaphysical and theological conceptions as all the other nations put together. For corresponding to the names of Leibnitz, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Jacobi, Fries, Herbart, Solger, Max Stirner, Feuerbach, Schopenhauer, Krieg, and a hundred others we find as many systems. If it is true that the Cartesian system served as a basis for the philosophy of Leibnitz, with what generosity did this new Aristotle repay a hundred-fold what he had received! He is the epitome of the learning of the seventeenth century, and the fruitful seeds which escaped from his hands have fertilised the most varied branches of study and fostered and furthered all departments of knowledge. The work of Kant alone, so abstract in reasoning and style, has given rise to three or four thousand commentaries, while that of Schelling, Hegel, or Schopenhauer has stirred the soul of every thinker by its mighty breath. In truth Germany has produced, and has also consumed, if we may be allowed the expression, a vast number of ideas. Her seekers after truth have plunged deeply into the most abstruse questions and soared to the most dizzy heights. No summit, however veiled in clouds, has repelled those indefatigable builders of human thought in their attempt to scale and surpass it. Hence we see the fundamental trait of the German nation has been the spirit of speculation and meditation. At least this was the case until the awakening of her belligerent instincts urged her to seek compensations of a more material character in the troubles and disenchantments of her destiny.

There is no doubt that German scholars, taken as a whole, are the most learned and thoughtful in Europe. Philosophical sagacity and a wide range of knowledge are in their minds almost inseparable qualities. They hold the front rank in the study of the mind of man. The native land of Bopp, of Humboldt, of Lassen, and the brothers Grimm, the founders of comparative philology, and of Frederick Diez, the pioneer of Romance philology, has proved itself the unrivalled home of orientalism. The curious remark has been made that if all the modern German orientalists were ranged on one side and those of the remainder of Europe, in addition to those of the Empire of India and the United States, on the other, the Germans would have the preponderance. But as a matter of fact contemporary France has by no means allowed Germany to surpass her in the question of oriental studies which have so especially aroused the scholars of Europe. Her missionaries were the first to visit the Celestial Empire, and the first known books of Zoroaster were obtained by Anquetil-Duperron at peril of his life. In the first third of the nineteenth century the study of Semitic languages was centred in Paris under the guidance of Silvestre de Sacy and Quatremère, while Abel de Rémusat really organised the initial attempts in comparative Turkish philology by his researches in the Tartar languages, and where he opened up a vast world, widely different from the rest, by his works on Buddhism. Champollion and Burnouf were more than mere scholars, they were philologists of genius and discoverers. The important discoveries which constitute modern orientalism[1] emanated from France. The great ancient civilisations of Persia, India, Egypt, Assyria,

[1] The great development of oriental studies in Germany deplaced France from her former position in the front rank, but according to James Darmesteter it was in an entirely new branch of these studies, namely, Semitic epigraphy, in which France was the leader. The same scholar observes that it was, moreover, a Frenchman, the chemist Arnaud, who discovered in the Yemen in 1843 the vast Hamitic civilisation which has left only a legendary souvenir—the Queen of Sheba.

Cambodia,[1] were first revealed to the world by Frenchmen; and if it is true that the home of Kalidasa was first discovered by the Englishmen Jones[2] and Colebrooke, it is no less true that in the later work of restoration it was the Frenchman, Burnouf, who gave it a very deep impress. Germany does not, then, rank first in the domain of oriental research on account of her discoveries, but because of the number of her works on the subject, the perseverance of her researches, the patience and reliability of her analyses. Her scholars are above all the pioneers of philology[3] on account of their love of work united with a clear comprehension of the necessity of specialisation in study, in order that it may be more profound. The Germans are indefatigable in perusing manuscripts or papyrus, and we find them often nobly giving up everything else in order, slowly and surely, to arrive with immense difficulty at results of a not very brilliant character in the eyes of the world, yet both helpful and suggestive to others, be it the fixing of a date, the deciphering of a text, the reading of an Assyrian ideogram, or the solution of an epigraphical problem. The value of their services may be reckoned in the number of discoveries made by them individually owing to the outlets now provided for their curiosity. Oftentimes they sacrifice in search of detail (that infinite detail without which our knowledge would always be superficial and imperfect), generalisations of a very attractive

[1] In 1860 a Frenchman, whose name is hardly known in France, even to a few scholars, and who, however, belongs to the family of the Anquetils and Mariettes, discovered in Cambodia the ruins of a lost civilisation, the remnants of which are as magnificent as those of Assyria and Egypt. His name is Henry Monchot (James Darmesteter, *Studies of the East*).

[2] The celebrated English orientalist, William Jones, the discoverer of *Sacountala*—that gem of the Sanskrit drama—was a poet as well as a scholar. His vivid imagination and unbounded curiosity made him one of the first to throw himself with ardour into Asiatic studies.

[3] See *The History of Linguistics and Oriental Philology in Germany since the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*, by Thomas Benfey, Munich 1869, in 8vo.

character. But happy and amply rewarded in their efforts are they if they have at least thrown an unexpected light [1] on a subject of however small a promise—a light which is capable of making many things clear, and one day being a factor in the building up of a number of facts. For indeed it is in this way—namely, by collaboration and the meeting of great minds—that individual works receive the contributions of other scholars and isolated studies are grouped together, and form complements to one another and by the force of centralisation attain unity.

No nation has, however, possessed in so remarkable a degree as the Germans the power of discovering general ideas, of uniting in a leading idea all the elements of a subject, of clearly perceiving the primal causes in the formation of languages, ideas, and religions. The Germans have revivified the most abstract [2] studies and those apparently the most arid by this essentially philosophic faculty being applied to all branches of knowledge.

Finally, the Germans were the creators, and have remained the masters of comparative grammar. For a considerable time they held the monopoly, making of all the branches which compose it as many special, active, and highly developed studies. It is from the Germans that those who speak a Romance or Celtic language have had to learn its history ; and when comparative philology did cross the Rhine and enter France, it was through the medium of the

[1] It was thus some few years ago that arose one of the warmest and most important discussions of Biblical exegesis concerning a passage in Isaiah, which turned on the employment of a pronoun.

[2] France, inferior to Germany in works of severe analysis and criticism, nevertheless finds once more her importance in works demanding accurate and methodical application, and in which the qualities of the scholar and those of the man of taste are blended in harmonious proportion. We may mention in passing that mathematical sciences form also one of the most important parts of her patrimony. It is France's boast to have produced more than any other nation those subtle and powerful minds capable of grasping the sum total of the truths which constitute the laws of number and space.

pupils of Bopp and Diez. Germany has become in the matter of research work the first laboratory of Europe, thanks to the admirable organisation of higher and university education, and thanks to the sympathies of a large public sufficiently educated and sufficiently just to recognise that in the intellectual life of a nation historical sciences are as of great value as the so-called exact sciences.

Emerson mentions somewhere *mental materialism* as one of the characteristic traits of the English mind—that is to say, the impossibility of thinking or reasoning without the aid of an actual fact or an illustration. How different, for example, is Wordsworth from Lamartine, the poet of the Romantic School, who is thought to resemble him most closely! Common sense is the characteristic mark of British talent, however lyrical and personal it may be and however deeply impregnated with a profound love of nature. On the other hand, it may err by lack of general ideas and loftiness of view in theoretical matters. Historians have shown us that in all respects, especially in political sciences, pure doctrine and philosophy flourished more on the Continent than in England, whereas logic and morals, especially the latter, were more successful here. If British leaders of thought have not risen to the height of Plato or Kant, we nevertheless recognise in them excellent moralists in respect of an exact knowledge of mankind, a precise sense of duty and a free guidance of the will. In this matter they have exercised a prolonged influence on the history of psychology and of moral and social doctrines. Even in metaphysics their action was far from being without fruit; and to convince ourselves we have only need to recall the names of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.

England stands first in the matter of political eloquence, and the number and continuity of her oratorical successes. For two centuries how many noble voices have proclaimed the rights of the people and the dignity of the individual!

The majesty of the English Parliament may be compared with the Pnyx of Athens or the Roman Forum. It is the temple of history and law, the ever-open platform of eloquence and liberty. The noblest objects that public speaking has ever defended have been discussed within its walls. Burke and Pitt pleaded there the cause of humanity, while that of the abolition of slavery was gained there by the intrepidity of Wilberforce. Concerning the fate of unfortunate Ireland, that perpetual victim of Statecraft, the impassioned accents of O'Connell, Shiel, Parnell, and Gladstone, were there heard. There too the cause of the worker and the poor were victoriously defended against the greed of the great proprietors by the sound common sense of Peel.

Generally speaking, and also more particularly in the matter of poetic inspiration, the English are characterised by the power of their thoughts, the energy of their expressions, the fruitfulness and variety, both in the substance and plan, of their works.

The Italian mind boasts of its innate tendency to contemplation of the material world as a fundamental quality, and attributes a predisposition which it receives from nature and the climate to an instinctive sensualism. It further possesses qualities of flexibility, suppleness, and expansion. One cannot, however, accord it an equal claim with the French mind to gifts of clearness, logic, and accurate classification, in the case of which these qualities are such eminent marks. Very often one is tempted to believe that Italy is moulded intellectually after the example of France, and *vice-versâ*, owing to their close proximity and continual literary exchanges.[1] In reality these sister-nations hardly resemble one another at all. The mobility of Italian thought, its prodigious powers of flitting from one topic to another without previous preparation, are disconcerting to the methodical mode of French thought ;

[1] See E. Arnould : *Influence exercée par la littérature italienne sur la littérature française.*

the former is, perhaps, more full of resource, while the latter, by dint of its slower progress, works more surely.

The Italian mind has been compared to a volcano, which is powerless except in ebullition ; it hurls heavenwards its columns of fire, and the spectacle is grandiose, but when the eruption draws to a close there only remains a heap of lava, cinders, pebbles and sulphur. The Italian mind will carry enthusiasm and imagination even into works of pure calculation or speculation. The Italian temperament is best seen under the aspect of passion ; under chilly skies it would become weak and lose its characteristics. As a result of this passionate nature the Italians have no taste for deductive reasoning and are wanting in sequence and precision of ideas. This assertion may seem too sweeping, however, for we cannot deny, without injustice and error, a love of observation and comparison which we have noticed before, and a keen appreciation of what is practical and useful. "The Italian," said Alfred Fouillée, a modern philosopher, "is a positivist artist, and that is what constitutes the originality of his national talent."

Italy is not lacking in scholars nor philosophers. Often serious reflection and sustained thought are the very qualities least cultivated by her authors. The cleverest among them seem of set purpose to neglect the whole for the sake of detail, the necessary for the agreeable, the plan of the book for embellishments of style, and to try, above all, not to move or convince but to propagate their thoughts in fantastic form and their style by means of its flashes. In short, the Italian cast of mind charms and attracts us ; it is brilliant but superficial, like the character of the people. Save for certain notable exceptions the profounder side of nature has often escaped the Italian, nor does he know mankind deeply or truly.

Spanish literature is profoundly original ; its poems are full of brilliant images, and breathe out heroism and exalta-

tion of mind ; they stimulate men to action and to great sacrifices for country and religion. Yet this literature has grave defects and faults. Spanish authors, long held in fear of the dungeons of the Inquisition and trammelled by the exclusive tendencies of the national mind, condemned themselves to incessant repetitions. The anachronisms and lack of local colour so often censured in the French drama of the seventeenth century are mere venial faults in comparison with those committed by Spanish writers. Lope de Vega and Calderon, too much praised by Schlegel and the Romantic School, are far from equalling Shakespeare. Spanish drama is quite unique ; it is rarely philosophical or human. The imagination of southern peoples is somewhat adverse to meditation.[1] So we see that Spain possesses great compilers rather than great historians, and that in the field of science she has only retained her superiority in cases where the imagination of her scholars can have full play, such as archæology and political economy, so prone to illusion, and in that respect bearing a certain relation to fiction. In a general sense reason has suffered owing to the preference accorded to lyrical outpourings and the cultivation of the imagination. To conclude we must make this observation, namely, that the appreciation of the beauties of nature and the simple pleasures of family life are almost totally absent from Spanish literature until the advent of the last contemporary novelists.

The essential traits of the Slav character are a keen appreciation of history corresponding to a deeply-rooted love of the race, an extraordinary impressionability of imagination, capable of receiving by turns the most passing or most lasting forms of ideas or sensations, and a boundless power of receptivity. It is important, too, to add a predominant

[1] Similarly in Portuguese literature we should notice such an intensely emotional temperament and recognise an almost complete incapacity for philosophical analysis.

mental characteristic, namely, a constant and intense preoccupation with moral questions. From the humblest to the greatest every thoughtful being, be he a character of fiction or a type drawn from life, is keenly interested in the altruistic problem of the attitude of the individual towards humanity at large. What is his duty to those of his village, his city, his race, and those beyond the bounds of his native land, to the rest of the world, which feels the same joys and pains? Journalists, critics, and close observers of the Slav mind have more than once remarked that no literature but the Russian bears in such a high degree that mark of a sovereign tendency, to which all personal, social, and political conceptions are subordinated. If Russia has produced no great philosopher[1] or distinguished metaphysician, she has held up for universal admiration life-like creations of an infinite complexity of mind, through the medium of those literary works, inspired by sympathy or based on argument, which her novelists and dramatists love to produce. Tolstoi and Dostoiewski have carried out as deeply and as widely as possible the intricate analysis of the most minute experiences of the physical and moral nature.

We might go much further in these comparisons between intellectual races, and this kind of analysis of their differences of mind and faculty as revealed in their literatures. But the outlook is too wide and the means at our disposal inadequate.

[1] An exception may be made in the case of the contemporary spiritualistic writer Soloviev, whose authority and influence have been immense. His metaphysical ideas were drawn in part from Schelling, from Jacob Böhme, from Swedenborg, from the Early Fathers, and the Neoplatonists.

VII

RECIPROCAL INFLUENCES AND REACTION OF ONE NATION ON ANOTHER

As we have pointed out before, there is scarcely a nation whose future place in the history of the world might not have been foretold to some extent by reason of their ruling characteristic or distinctive quality. This predisposition, due to race or climate, has resulted in their national pre-eminence.

Italy may be congratulated upon possessing poetic and artistic genius. France may be justly given credit for her introduction of great theories, and is sovereign in matters of good taste. England is famous for her common sense and her practicality. Germany is noted for the thoroughness of research, ingenious speculation, and learned deductions. Holland, the home of philosophers, claims for herself sovereignty in the intellectual world. The fellow-countrymen of Grotius and Spinoza rightfully contend that if Nature has denied to them the politeness of the Frenchman, the perspicacity of the Englishman and the vivacity of the Italian, she has amply compensated Holland by endowing her with that clarity of mental vision and delicate sense of justice which is conspicuous in her history and in her writings. It may be added, the elementary education is at a higher level in Holland than elsewhere in Europe. They have remained constant in their national ideals and national religion and in their independence; while owing to their open-mindedness they are more cosmopolitan than any other people. English ideas prevail at Rotterdam. Amsterdam is practically a German city. The Dutchman's phlegmatic nature softens as well as unites the good qualities and the faults of his three great neighbours.[1]

[1] We may here note that Holland has spread abroad in every direction the results of her scientific and commercial activity. This has not been

Every nation, like every individual, receives in its early stages of development its particular bent and its characteristic stamp. Each nation has manifested the more or less ambitious idea of performing a national or international function. It was not only the Hebrews who deemed themselves a people chosen, destined to transform the world and give it a Messiah. Greece considered herself the educator of humanity, and charged with imparting to it the triumphs of art and learning. The East boasted of its incomparable antiquity as the source of all the races. "Athenians, you are mere children," said a priest of Saïs to Solon. With far better authority a priest of Brahma might address the same words to modern Europe. The Romans called themselves unreservedly the *sovereign people*, allowing of neither control nor share of the honour. When invaded by the barbarians, the Roman people had not as yet abdicated the throne, and when, owing to the collapse of the Empire, it was at last obliged to abandon its long temporal domination, it made catholicism serve its spiritual dominion of the world by establishing the papacy. The English nation has laid claim to the privilege, which she would like to remain hers exclusively, of conquering seas and colonising distant lands. America represents her vast States as a theatre in which to

the case with her literary expansion, which is relatively very small. Despite its abundant production, the land of Vondel, Bilderdijk, Jacob van Lennep, and Multatuli has never seen the best fruits of the labours of its poets, novelists, and historians become acclimatised in other countries. But for some rare echoes heard on the frontiers, their works have remained confined within the narrow limits of their native country. Not one of their books had attained European celebrity. (We are here speaking of works of imagination, for few men of talent have enjoyed a more world-wide reputation than Erasmus and Grotius.) This species of isolation has been attributed to linguistic difficulties and to an habitual fault of writers, namely, that prolixity which inculcates the minute research for the exact and the finite. Again, it is thought to be due to the characteristics of the national mind in which the innate love of the positive and the preponderating taste for practical ideas necessarily restrains the flight of fancy; or again, to a religious spirit, which has confined within narrow bounds minds capable of moving on a far wider plane.

display progress and carry to completion the development of liberty of every kind in all departments of the speculative or practical life. Every day the pages of her writers and the impassioned discourses of her statesmen stir up her inhabitants to live with "intensity,"[1] because they have attained the highest degree of culture and constitute the greatest nation in the world. There is scarcely an American, says a philosopher, who has not before his eyes in a more or less clear manner this ideal of unlimited individualism and indefinite expansion. As for Germany, she has never believed more firmly than to-day in her scientific and political mission, even as she believed in the time of Luther in her mission as a religious reformer. Before seizing the Imperial crown by an iron rule, she abrogated to herself intellectual hegemony; she crowned herself in the persons of her scholars, philosophers and servants. Finally contemporary France, although weakened and crippled and confined on all hands by rivals, claims a foremost place in virtue of her ideas, her literature, her art, and the cosmopolitan nature of her influence.

In truth, and we can only repeat it, there is no example of an absolute and final intellectual dictatorship. Many civilisations formerly brilliant, but now extinct, have descended step by step from their position of splendour, or have been brusquely precipitated thence.[2] By turns Athens, Rome, Alexandria, Constantinople, Bagdad, the Italy of Leo X. and the Spain of Charles V. have been conscious of their slow effacement from the world. These are the lessons learnt from the past; as to the future, how can we determine the mysterious changes that are bound to come? Literatures, whether as master or disciple, as sovereign or tributary,

[1] See *The Strenuous Life*, by President Roosevelt.

[2] "Where are they," cried Volney, the traveller, when, seated on a fallen column, he meditated in the light of dying day; "where are the sites of Palmyra, the ramparts of Persepolis and the temples of Baalbeck and Jerusalem?"

have in so marked a degree acted and reacted upon one another, so confusedly exchanged what they have mutually borrowed and interwoven their ideas in such a varied fashion that it becomes singularly difficult to assess justly the share of genuine originality which belongs to each, or to inscribe in the book of history an exact and perfectly accurate account in the name of each. Their mutual dependence is constantly betrayed; it would require several volumes to note the inexhaustible number of loans contracted between authors or nations, beginning with the Greeks, who were very apt at imitation.[1]

VIII

THE RESULTS OF MUTUAL IMITATION

It would be an endless task to peruse the history of literatures with a view to noting in detail what they owe one another. If we glance rapidly at the Oriental civilisations we see that the Indian fables have stocked the world with a multitude of tales and popular songs which have been continually transformed *en route*.[2] If we go back further and review the whole domain of art, we shall find that the Phœnicians, Persians and Hittites borrowed nearly everything from Egypt and Assyria, while all more recent nations have drawn enormously on Greek sources. The entire intellectual development of Rome at the various periods was accomplished on the exclusive principle of the imitation of

[1] The borrowings were so frequent among them that certain authors, like Aristophanes the Grammarian, and Philostratus of Alexandria, seriously undertook to make note of them.

[2] See the magnificent introduction by the Indian scholar, Thomas Benfey, to *Pantchatantra* (five books of Indian fables, published at Leipzig in 1859, 2 vols. in 8vo), also a curious article by Gaston Paris on the *Contes orientaux du moyen âge*, which appeared in the *Revue politique et littéraire*, 2 avril, 1875, and various dissertations on this subject by Wieber in Germany, Max Müller in England, by Dozy in Holland, by Fontanals in Spain, and Comparetti in Italy.

Greece. Following the expression of La Motte, Phædrus wished to be the Æsop of the Romans, just as Virgil wished to be their Homer, Terence their Menander, and Horace their Pindar. Practically only one branch of literature flourished at that time, namely, the satire, in which the Romans took themselves as models. In the Middle Ages the French "*chansons de gestes*" (the common source from which the "*jongleurs*" and "*trouveurs*" constantly drew their supplies of material) almost sufficed to divert the imagination of all Europeans, from the natives of Iceland to the Greeks of Constantinople. For a considerable period the majority of poets and the best of them even, such as Patrarch, Christine de Pisan, Chaucer and Clément Marot drew their inspiration from the *Roman de la Rose*, whilst the authors of "*fabliaux*" had no scruples in imitating the Oriental legends made known to the world by the Arabs and Jews. When we speak of the troubadours in the South it is to emphasise the fact that they transmitted to the poetry of Spain, and more especially of Italy, not only their subjects and rhythmic forms, but, as we have previously noted, the very poetic inspiration itself. Until Italy in turn took the initiative she continued to live on these French and Provençal poems, which were the delight of all feudal Europe.

At the time of the Renaissance there was a servile imitation of the ancients. People imagined they had accomplished everything, and nothing remained but to copy them. Ronsard, Baif, Joachim du Bellay and other poets of the "Pleiad," and later Bertaut and Desportes submitted slavishly to the discipline of Italian humanism.[1] Spain, which furnished other Latin peoples with so many subjects, suddenly saw her literary as well as her political influence cease in the reign of Louis XIV. As in the fifteenth century, when

[1] We can discern among the amorous sonnets of Joachim du Bellay all kinds of themes borrowed from the humanists of Florence, Ferrara, Padua, Bologna or Naples. Consult the skilful comparisons of Mons. Henri Hauvette in an important work on the Florentine poet, Luigi Alamanni : *Un exilé florentin à la cour de France au seizième siècle*, 1 vol. in 8vo, 1903.

lacking in boldness and without faith in herself, she had borrowed these qualities from others, she had once more become a copyist in subjection to her former imitators; her drama consisted solely of translations. In English literature we find two schools, one frankly Anglo-Saxon, very original and full of naturalness and spirit ; the other having arisen under the influence of the French literary leaders of the seventeenth century. The latter is more refined, more thoughtful, often cold and less original, but endowed with good sense and refinement like the models from which inspiration was drawn—an Anglo-French school we might almost call it.

"We should not be far from the truth," remarks Nisard, "if we affirmed that Pope and Dryden only reflected the French eighteenth century, either in regard to its ideal of man according to philosophy or in its utopias of man according to nature." To sum up, as we approach the nineteenth century, German, Russian and Norwegian literatures all appear full of imitations and adaptations. The Russians especially have long given us the impression that they possess all powers of the mind save the most important —inventiveness. "Among the great European literatures," says Ferdinand Brunetière, "for the last two or three hundred years there has been a continual exchange of ideas. We might call it the transformations of matter, malleable and capable in some sort of receiving a diversity of impressions, marks and forms from the particular bent of each people as it passes from Spain or Italy, for example, to France from France to England, from England to France, and at a later period from England to Germany, and from Germany to France."

IX

THE MULTITUDE OF IDEAS WHICH CROWD THE WORLD. DOES THIS FORETELL A CONTINUED PROGRESS?

These literatures, more or less distinct in origin and character or more or less interwoven finally, are united in an all-embracing unity. Modern Europe, not to say the greater part of the world, must be considered, when regarded as a whole, as a very complex organism. The general notion of it can no longer be what it appeared to the Romans, the expression of a noble type, full of greatness and simplicity, but it must be the result of a certain harmony among a crowd of diverse elements. The soul or life of this whole is not to be sought in this or that quarter, but in the mutual harmony of arrangement or elaborate complexity of the parts of which it is composed.

As nations become more closely united they seem more like a single body of human beings conscious of their collective existence amidst so many points of contact, friendly or inimical, so much intercourse, *itus reditusque*. Their resemblances appear all the more to the advantage of practical life, perhaps, but certainly to the detriment of originality, which is the quintessence of a people's art or literature.

Formerly, as we have pointed out, the different intellectual zones had, as it were, their particular mode of culture and vegetation, almost exclusively their own, and their divisions corresponded with those of nature. At the present time man has so prodigiously extended his power over time and space that the frontiers of countries are mere demarcations for purposes of custom duties, purely arbitrary boundaries, and where the ocean unites all the scattered peoples of the earth by commerce and the exchange of thought, these distinctions seem more than ever irrational. Individual national characteristics disappear; the active waves of modern thought,

impelled in all directions by the movement of an irresistible circulation, drown the primitive characters of races.

" Everything is astonishing," says one of the most eloquent of men, " even if we only look into particular causes ; nevertheless, all advances along a regular line." If the need for comprehending this systematic progression is the condition of existence of universal history as applied to the moral as well as the political world, that history must aspire to explain and indicate the trend of that movement. Humanity, involved in a continual evolution, does not advance blindly. There occur at each stage the changes of external circumstances which modify the character of its progress and their actions, which, so to speak, reveal its guiding principle and constitute the connecting links in the chain. In truth, humanity has not always moved at an equal pace, " with eyes turned towards that mysterious East where new centuries are born," according to the poetical phrase of Charles de Mouy ; it has experienced grim hours of convulsions and diminution, brusque alternation of happy abundance and prolonged sterility, ages of ignorance and misery succeeding without logical transition periods of prosperity and glory, which, without at any given period having produced absolute interruption or a complete gap, have many times forced it to remain stationary. Nor has it progressed, as Mme. de Staël imagined, in a spiral movement, that is to say by ever reverting to itself without going backwards, however, to the last limit in retrograde steps ; it has rather undergone successive crises of which each marks a time of arrested development more or less fixed. The notion of an indefinite perfectibility, pushed to its logical consequences, would be a pure chimera.

The ancients believed but little in progress. We know Horace's words to the Romans announcing an irremediable decay of the human race. It is a pagan idea, marked by a too advantageous flattery for the present and a too unjust despair for the future. Modern philosophy has rejected this theory, seeing that reason bids man never despair of himself,

nor of his posterity, nor of his country. On the other hand, it would be no less illusory to abandon oneself unreservedly to a too complaisant optimism which would result from the opposite opinion, namely, that progress is the result of an irresistible law, which ascends inevitably and is superior to the intervention of the will, that its continuity is never broken and the last comers, rich in the experience of past ages, are necessarily the best. To beat about the bush with a specious theme of this sort is equivalent to getting lost in a mirage from which one can draw at will the most contrary inductions. Scientifically speaking man does not cease to advance—that is a truth of everyday experience—for he daily increases his means of control over the rude forces of nature and matter. Industries grow, knowledge increases, and fine arts are developed. Morally and intellectually the human brain remaining always a constant quantity, the difficult question arises as to whether we are superior to our parents, whose errors, faults, and possibly whose crimes we reproduce, without appreciably raising the level of their aspirations or surpassing them by a maximum of intelligence. In what very striking manner does the present age stand out as preferable to preceding ages? Civilisation has marched with giant strides, but has life become longer or happier for each of us?

Do we feel less painfully than our ancestors the incertitude of our condition, the hopeless impenetrability of the mystery with which we are surrounded, because we have made dykes against the inroads of the sea, unloosed the motor-forces of rivers and waterfalls, pierced mountains, weighed the sun, created fresh suns to give light by night, penetrated the abyss of space and time, and with marvellous precision gauged the cycles of astral life? Do we think more deeply than Job, asked Lamartine, with more reason than Confucius, with greater nobility and more poetry than Plato? Do our poets think more divinely than Homer and Virgil? Do we speak with greater eloquence than Demosthenes, Thucydides, or Cicero?

If we revert to the most recent comparisons, if we take the trouble to study closely the signs which accompanied the passing of the last century, weary of its labours and its wealth of production, what do they reveal in such dim times but the exhaustion of moral force, an uneasy and sterile scepticism, the vain effort to gather together the scattered seeds containing a hope for the future, together with the general disillusion of even the minds most confident in the perfectible qualities of humanity? In regard to this matter we have only to reflect, and to reflect at length, on the melancholy thoughts of Herbert Spencer, who in 1902 brought a long career to a close with a species of *ultima verba* of a profoundly despairing nature. After having firmly believed in the final triumph of truth in the formidable combat between error and science, he cries, "I have worked in vain and expended my forces to no purpose." He sees before his eyes the forced and wrongful cultivation of the brain, the abuses of the Press, false social progress, the vilification of character, the scorn of the beautiful, the degradation of art, which now only seeks to please instead of to instruct; militarism producing rough manners, "a pseudo-patriotism, which is," as he says, "no more than diabolism"; imperialism stirring up shameful wars; the general tendency to despotism in government, education, industry, and the great indifference of the masses. He thence concludes that the world is returning to barbarism and slavery, and confesses, as death approaches, that he is looking on at a universal decay.

Only the gradual results of the exact sciences as well as those of the science of history, in so far as it proceeds by the laws of comparative observation and positive criticism, can be regarded as undeniable elements of progression. It is thanks to these sciences especially that the intellectual state of humanity will be modified slowly but thoroughly and in a definite manner. By the spread of these sciences there will at length arise the various forces which concur to the moral elevation of humanity. Their daily advance will be more

rapid and more appreciable in the sum of positive facts, the linking of which makes for the fusion of nations, of their interests, their languages and ideas.

We should like here to sum up briefly the ideals which have stirred mankind wherever the growth of human intelligence has found its historic expression and revealed itself in a succession of works. Its former variations and its present physiognomy crystallised into brief formulæ would serve us for the induction of future metamorphoses. What exists to-day will exist in the future and will end in a similar manner, carried away by the force of circumstances. There will always be this need for idealising which permits man to accredit both truth and error with a superior life; also his conflict with nature, and his powerless efforts to dominate her will be endless. There will likewise always be the perpetual alternatives of greatness and weakness, of rise and decline, of expansion and decay, which are found at all periods of intellectual history, that is to say from one extremity to another of all these successive moments that we have called centuries.

Beyond these signs which are to be noted permanently, what will be the signs on the horizon of the phases of a final development and apart from the most recent local peculiarities, the final vestiges of native originality which are everywhere tending to disappear? Our powers of vision are not extended enough to grasp all distinctly. However, there are a few facts of a political and social order which hitherto and henceforth permit us to make very plausible forecasts concerning the future repartition of intellectual forces. These facts are before our very eyes. They are closely linked with general and important events which are in process of coming into being, and the elements of which are clearly visible to one who has his eyes open. They are to be seen in the movement of the mutual attraction of East and West. They are to be perceived in the ceaseless expansion of certain favoured languages, which, owing to the vastness of the terri-

tories which they serve, are evidently destined to greater longevity.

Finally they point to certain groupings of nations, destined, in process of growth, to take precedence of the others by virtue of their strength or by their numerical superiority. Indeed, these groups are frankly rivals in a new partition of the globe, if not for actual dominion, at least for conformity in language, manners and customs. The unlimited ambitions of English Imperialism, of which the Transvaal War has been one of the most recent manifestations, the vigorous growth of Pan-Germanism which Germany evinces on all sides, the slow movements of Pan-Slavism, which incline the Russian colossus now towards Europe, now towards Asia, all combine to show us daily with what intensity the great Powers exert their efforts to insure a world supremacy of their politics, their individual character, or their written or spoken language.

X

RIVALRIES OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES FOR THEIR EXPANSION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

In the great European struggle for supremacy, the chief characteristic of which is, as far as possible, to extend influence by means of the language, the chances of success are very unequal. From a numerical point of view there is no doubt but that the sphere of action of the English and Spanish languages is greater than that of French or German, far greater than Italian or Greek, Swedish, Norwegian and others of negligeable quantity.

To the former are open limitless spaces in the five continents, including the United States, that vast union which in a near future will count 200,000,000 inhabitants both speaking and writing it. English is spoken throughout the entire

world, and is to be found on every shore bounding the oceans.[1]

To the latter, apart from its now restricted area in Europe, belongs the still populous island of Cuba, recently wrested from its political dominion, and Mexico in North America, the whole of South America except the Guianas, and Brazil, so immense, which will soon possess from 80,000,000 to 100,000,000 inhabitants speaking the language of Camoens. Yet in point of view of superficial area of extension, neither of these languages can compare with the Chinese colossus or the Russian, both in Europe and Asia.

Among the most important facts in the history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and one full of the gravest consequences, is the enormous growth of Russian power and the gigantic strides it has made. The voice of Russia's statesmen, such as Pobiedonostzeff threatening to Russianise the world, the influence of her writers and her journalists, are destined in the near future to bring about important and decisive events in regard to the evolution of the peoples of Europe. The numerical development of her population will, in less than a century, have attained alarming proportions. The Russian language already is spread over a seventh of the globe.

It is not to be supposed that the French language will at any near date lose the position it has held for a long succession of centuries, nor its ascendancy in thought and power, both of which it has preserved in virtue of its literary, artistic, and diplomatic means of expression. Geographically

[1] During the Victorian era, a period of some sixty years, the white colonial population under English rule increased from 1,250,000 to 11,000,000, while that of the mother-country from 26,000,000 mounted to 40,000,000. Leaving India out of reckoning, Canada has 5,000,000 inhabitants, Australia about the same. Nearly a million Europeans live in British possessions in Africa. It has been calculated the space available in Canada, Australia, and even South Africa will lend itself to colonial multiplication to some hundreds of millions, who will one day be united in language and civilisation.

speaking, not to mention its annexes, such as Belgium, French-speaking Switzerland, and the Canadian territory, vast spaces will further be opened up to it in the Sahara regions, Central Africa, Asia, and Indo-China. We may also add that it has the privilege of a great diffusion in Western Europe; that French is still the chief medium of intercommunication between the peoples who swarm around the shores of the Sea of Marmora and the Bosphorus, and that the teaching of French occupies a foremost place in the list of educational subjects in many countries.

Before 1880 Germany only possessed a fraction of land outside Europe. Twenty years later her flag floated victoriously over some 1,500,000 square miles of territory occupied by some 16,000,000 inhabitants, not counting the colonists of Brazil and Palestine. In virtue of the powerful growth which continues to be manifested by the German nation, and is revealed in its vigorous attempts at colonial expansion,[1] the progress of the German language is bound to be considerable. But it will appear much restricted in comparison with the chances of the Russian or English tongues. As for Italian, on the other hand, it seems little likely to extend beyond its actual geographical limits.

Throughout the world certain States will lose their rank, there will be changes of equilibrium capable of influencing to a greater or less degree the various modes of interpreting thought, and also absorption of numerous secondary lan-

[1] We may here notify an interesting fact. In the Nile Valley, Arab literature and civilisation which, since the capture of Cordova, had only evinced rare signs of life in Tunis, Cairo and Syria, seem to-day to be awaking from a prolonged sleep. Quite a generation, at a time not very distant from our own, has striven to renew Arab poetry, and includes such names as Ismail Pacha Sabry, Mahmoud Pacha Samy E. Baroudy, Ahmed Bey Chawky, and Hefny Bey Nassif. It is also in the language of Moallakat that, under the dynasty of Mohammed Ali, these moderns have sung the praises of those frequent objects of Oriental inspiration—the passions of man and the great effects of nature. It has been shown, as recently as 1902, in the *Mercure de France*, that Egypt at the present time is the centre of nearly every Arab intellectual effort.

guages by those destined to a greater expansion, and sooner or later to engulf the rest. It is not probable, in fact hardly possible, that the Turks will ever again evince that energy which, according to a remark of Littré,[1] once brought them to the foot of the ramparts of Vienna. On the contrary, most likely all the countries composing Turkey in Europe are destined to become Russian or Greek. The Arabs, whose empire during the Middle Ages extended from Bagdad to the Pyrenees, will retain, in addition to Arabia, the important territories of Syria, Egypt (although already very much anglicised), Tripoli, a large portion of Tunis, of Algeria, and the Soudan, with the region beyond. It is hardly probable, however, that their civilisation can resume its former proportions in such of these in which European ideas have spread, a sure sign of the growth and progress of Western powers, such as were formerly called Christian, and which now contest the possession of the greatest Mussulman territory. Persia, since the time of the numerous dynasties founded on the ruins of the Khalifate of Bagdad, has never seen the return of a period like that of Achemenides or Sapor.

To-day Persia, the object of the antagonistic designs of Russia and England, seems likely to be crushed by this twofold pressure, on the north owing to territorial encroachments, and on the south by maritime advance. Without disappearing altogether from the map, seeing she has an enormous vitality of her own, this unfortunate land is likely to be the battlefield of the two nations before mentioned. Many Asiatic languages will be effaced, others also will not be proof against greater strength, and the last traces of native peoples will yield to pressure, and disappear as mere rudiments supported by no written tradition.[2]

[1] See in the *Revue positive* an article by Littré, the leading ideas of which we have summarised very briefly.

[2] Comparing the statistics of the development of the European and Asiatic languages throughout the world about the year 1900, we find

On the other hand owing to the expansion of England, Spain, Russia, France, Germany, and Holland, western learning has penetrated all parts of the world, and has resulted in giving a considerable impetus to general progress.

For many years America and Australia stand on an equal footing with the Old World, and make no attempt to conceal their ambition of wresting from it a pre-eminence based on priority of civilisation. Villemain, looking ahead, pictured to himself this new English-speaking world of America, which is being opened up and developed so rapidly, and which will be peopled like Europe, when ships traverse the Panama Canal, in which so many millions of money have been swallowed up, but which will ultimately facilitate the means of communication to a remarkable degree. He eloquently wrote, "What an immense tract the language of Shakespeare will traverse ; in what far lands, unknown as yet to him, will his works be read, and in what theatres will his dramatic talent be revealed and his method imitated!" In another land, namely in India, inhabited by between two and three hundred millions whom England's dominating power will be unable ultimately to hold, European ideas are incessantly penetrating, despite a fatally passive religion. Already in 1871, a native paper, the *Akbar-i-Anjuman-i Penjâb*, protested in a clever article against the word "half-civilised," as applied to the Hindoos, not hesitating to declare Hindostan far more civilised than China and even Persia.

One might trace a very vivid picture of the intellectual life of the provinces of India in which the indigenous languages preserved in the public schools, serve as a vehicle for the introduction of the manners, learning, and moral ideas of Europe. In religion, customs, and institutions, as well as

approximately that English is spoken by 116,000,000, Russian by 85,000,000, German by 80,000,000, French by 58,000,000, Spanish by 44,000,000, Japanese by 40,000,000, Italian by 34,000,000, and Chinese by 360,000,000. These statistics take no account of the unequal areas of the spheres of influence of the respective languages.

family life, the Hindoos have remained aloof from British influence. But reformers have arisen in the heart of modern India, who, like Malabari, have seriously laboured by lectures and books to bring about a closer relation between the Asiatic and the Western mind. On the sacred soil where the Aryans of Supta were wont to sing their epics and compose their genealogies of the gods and their grammars, and to go through the cycle of philosophies, the living sources[1] of inspiration began to flow in these climates so richly endowed with the wonders of nature, at a period when our European forests sheltered mere barbarians.

It suffices to have merely touched on the study of the philosophies and the religions of Central Asia to understand easily the capacities for intellectual development of the legendary land of Iran to discover what a taste Persia has for the intellectual, by what great religious revolutions she has been stirred during the last fifty years, and all that could arouse impassioned speech in this people as did recently that of Bâb.

People have often called attention to the unique phenomenon of Chinese civilisation developing from its earliest stage with extraordinary rapidity, anticipating Europe in the invention of printing, lithography, as in many other discoveries, and producing from its own resources an extensive literature ; then suddenly coming to a standstill, advancing no farther, crystallising itself in the cult of tradition ; closing its doors on the future, and of steadfast resolve repudiating the law of progress, the notions of right, of union and co-operation, it refused on principle to give any fresh impetus to the progress of the preceding ages. This has been the case with China for a number of centuries. But the moment is not far distant, if it has not

[1] The author of a curious work, *The Vestiges of Civilisation*, pushing this idea of indefinite progress to a paradox, foresaw the day when the highest culture of the banks of the Seine would be carried to those of the Hudson and Susquehannah, as if, indeed, civilisation could not extend its territory without losing its own characteristics.

already arrived, when this historical commonplace will cease to be a truth. In spite of obstinate resistance, Western ideas and customs have at last penetrated the frontiers of the Chinese Empire. The applied sciences, mechanics, and the construction of machinery are there making rapid strides. Under the direction of English, French and German teachers education itself is being modified without the stumbling-blocks created by a routine of many ages' standing being able to check the slow but certain change. A movement is apparent which is inevitably carrying this immense population towards modern progress, a people so long trammelled with the traditions of bygone ages. It is easy henceforth to discount the results of the moral, political, and intellectual transformation which China is called upon to receive when she has definitely abandoned her false principles, her blind obedience and soul-killing rigidity. With the enormous means at her disposal, she will certainly occupy a considerable, if not an overpowering position, in the work of universal civilisation. These four hundred millions of people, inferior as they may be intellectually, but occupying a continuous tract of territory (very different from the British Empire divided between Europe, Asia, Africa, and America), cannot fail to be no negligeable force in the matter of balance of power. Finally, in the extreme East a body of teachers from Europe and America, and united among themselves by solidarity of interests, have won over a nation of forty millions to modern civilisation. The Japanese, since they have adopted European pedagogic methods, with the best results, reckon on soon reaching the level of Western learning. The University of Tokio considers itself on the same plane with that of Paris. A criticism, based on an intimate knowledge of general development, would not hesitate to place on a footing of equality the most celebrated writers of Europe and America and the most famous poets, novelists, orators, or essayists of contemporary Japan.[1] We see this intelli-

[1] For example, one might well draw a parallel as regards essayists

gent and learned people aspiring to commercial and political supremacy on the shores of the Pacific, a nation which, as we have said, is among those which published the greatest number of books. It has increased that number fivefold between 1880 and 1900. Day by day the official world encourages learning, gives protection to talent, and develops the resources of education ; so that no doubt exists in any one's mind as to Japan's constituting a considerable centre of activity, both within her own realm and in regard to the world at large.

Although it has often been maintained that neither in remote times have the conquests of Alexander, nor in more recent times the twofold efforts of England and Russia succeeded in modifying the Oriental mind,[1] yet this modification is patent, slower elsewhere than in Japan, yet certain and progressive on all sides. East and West so long divided

alone, who so abound in Japan, between the illustrious Fukuzawa and the American Emerson ; between that original writer Tagochii Ukichi, who extolled the renaissance of Chinese style, or an imitation of it, and that "cosmopolitan philosopher," the German Engel ; between the moral and æsthetic writer, Shiga, and the Englishman, Samuel Johnson ; between the brilliant author, Fukuchi, and the Frenchman, Alphonse Karr, and so on.

We perceive, however, that there is an indication of exaggeration in these appreciations and abundant praise which are the fruit of the enthusiasm of novelty. If we consider Dr. Inoue Tetsujiro a good judge of Yedo, and one not blinded by national complaisance, Japanese literature leaves much to be desired. The prose writers are numerous, but very mediocre ; the poets are lacking in great thoughts, despite the boldest flights of imagination ; dramatic art is confined, as in times of yore, to an exposition of cruel deeds and melodramatic scenes. The novel goes on the old lines although more popular than formerly. Japanese critics desire a more extensive general culture for their compatriots, and a greater depth of human emotion and a deeper study of nature for their country's authors. (*Nichi-Nichi Shimboum*, 1903, according to a clever article in the *Revue des Revues.*)

[1] See, for example, a curious article by the writer Meredith Townsend on the subject entitled, *Has Europe really Exercised an Influence in Asia ?* and concluding with a negative (*Contemporary*, February, 1902).

are now being united at all points ; an antipathy of centuries' duration is gradually fading away.

Up to the present time humanity, as has been before mentioned, was perpetually divided into two parallel and inimical currents—the European and the Asiatic. The battle of East and West began with civilisation, the seeds of which, so often fertilised in the plains of Asia by the influence of its blue skies, were as often uprooted from the soil. From the fifth century before our era, Herodotus reduces all history to the eternal conflict of Europe against Asia, of Greece against barbarism.[1] With the Homeric epics we see the characteristics of this immortal combat as revealed between the Greeks and Trojans. After the fall of Ilium, the European spirit did not cease to strive against the Oriental, to invade and dominate it. Hence, in process of time, the humiliation of Persia, the colonisation of Asia Minor, the overstepping of the ramparts of the Taurus as of a mere wall, the invasion of India, the subjugation of Bactria to the Greeks, and the subjection of numerous empires to Rome. We may declare henceforth that the West has entirely supplanted the East, has robbed it of its rights of primogeniture, and will in turn determine the destinies of the human race. Asia seems for a brief space to have risen and taken revenge in the case of Mithridates—a temporary wavering of fortune which was to be decided by the great disaster of the Pontic wars. Under Heliogabalus and Constantine a passing retrograde movement made Europe once more on two occasions bend to Asia. In

[1] It is in this fashion that the religious history of the Greeks in particular has been represented to us. The conflict between the religion of the barbaric world and philosophical Greece, between credulous Asia and thoughtful Europe, knew no truce. Asia unceasingly offers new religions to Greece. "Like the waves of the rising tide we see them century after century approach one after another, always gaining ground despite the resistance of the Hellenic spirit. Herodotus did not foresee that for a considerable time the last word would rest with Asia" (Bréard, *Origin of the Akkad Religions*).

these early times Europe was occupied in the elaboration of new peoples destined to arise from the ruins of the Old World. The Mussulman invasion produced a decided movement of retrogression in the Christian West. Between the time of Charlemagne and the Crusades, Europe concentrated itself afresh and, abandoning its quiescence, allowed no fresh interruptions of its efforts. It expelled the Arabs, emancipated Provence and Languedoc, restoring to Spain her territory, retaking Sicily, Malta, Greece, and the Italian coasts and unceasingly carrying its armies, its ideas, its manners, its languages, and the superiority of its modern sentiments to the far confines of Asia.[1]

The East since the prolonged victory has yielded day by day to the ascendancy of Europe. Sudden retrogressions have still reduced it to its former level. Symptoms of revolt which occur at intervals have set these Asiatics against their rivals of all time. But yesterday the challenge of an audacious war was thrown down by Japan to the Russian colossus, to the astonishment of the world. Great anxiety was felt by the " European mother-country " on account of this bellicose encounter of these two peoples, entering upon the contest with equal force of arms, their fleets, their armies, their guns, and their similar strategic knowledge. Nevertheless, Western humanism has pursued its intellectual, moral, and industrial conquest of the universe. With the exception of certain isolated regions among the mountains Eastern Asia is open to the world. Our customs perforce penetrate into countries even most obstinately attached to their immemorial traditions and their ancient formulæ. These two immense countries meet ; a continuous flow is established between people and people all over the earth, across continents and across oceans. We may add that the longest voyages have become a mere play of the imagination, that the union of Eastern Asia and the European world is, as we have just asserted, final. Further, that events have given England between 50,000 and 60,000

[1] Philarète Chasles.

miles of frontier along the Thibetan and Chinese borders, that France has recently carved for herself a vast empire on the confines of Asia, that Russia pursues her march to the borders of India relentlessly ; and that Japan especially, but also China, have on their own initiative and with an unforeseen rapidity allied themselves with the general forward movement of history. Such considerations will afford us some forecast of the future.

"The peoples of Europe and Asia," said Réclus, the philosopher and geographer, "formerly lived as separate worlds ; now the United States are peopled with emigrants who have made it another Europe, and it is between these two Europes, that of the Old and that of the New World, that the Chinese people is confined ; on the east and the west the same ideas and the same concrete examples are forced upon that nation. The world has become too small for civilisation to develop in isolation in separate areas without being brought under the influence of a superior civilisation." There will be inevitable conflict—the conflict of labour and the conflict of passion—between these two gigantic masses, which on both sides will marshal hundreds of millions of human beings, actuated by opposing interests, and very far from as yet understanding the advantages of universal solidarity. It has been justly said that the drawing together of the restless and versatile populations of Europe and the stationary and conservative peoples of China will perhaps be regarded by our descendants as the greatest event in the history of our planet.[1] A formidable economic and financial crisis, perhaps a political and social one, will result from this encounter of the Eastern and Western worlds. But sooner or later the law of intellectual harmony will prevail in the pacified world, and under progressive influence the conception will spread far and wide, without excluding the notions of race and country, of a moral standard, hitherto unknown and only presaged, which is destined to give mankind the most

[1] Cp. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu : *L'Asie et L'Europe*, 1902.

equitable compensation for all that it lacks here below in its uncertain destiny.

XI

THE LAST WORD CONCERNING THESE GREAT INTELLECTUAL COMPETITIONS

We are approaching unity, and everything foretells this state of things. Nations are, without their being able to prevent it, borne along in the same whirl of life ; it is the great sign of the times. Unparalleled activity is exerted in the accomplishment of this task of concentration of combination. Every day intrepid travellers, yielding to their own impulse or following the plans of their Government, do not hesitate to traverse unknown lands and seas in order to include them in the domain of positive geography, or to open up new outlets for the prodigious produce of European industry which fills the markets of the world to overflowing. Soon Paris, London, St. Petersburg, Pekin, Melbourne, Yokohama, San Francisco, and New York will only form parts of one great whole, namely, the world-market as economists call it, in which equilibrium will be established at any given moment between the supply and demand of any part of the world.

Humanity thus tends in all its manifestations of literature, art, industry, and commerce, more and more to exceed the narrow limits of nationalities, the notion of which people have tried to revive in recent times. But when man increases to an enormous extent his points of contact with nature, how can the influences of environment persist in any measure with a similarly powerful force ? That the nearer acquaintance and consequent mutual influence of the various nations shall have, as an inevitable result, an undermining of their individuality, is not to be doubted. It is the evident law of actual evolution, a law, moreover, they cannot escape. Intellectual cosmopolitanism will extend and level national

differences, civilisation will continue its way inexorably destructive of local variations. Types will disappear, peculiarities will vanish, man will everywhere become more like his fellows, and travellers traversing the world will find less singular contrasts and less interesting details of manners and customs than the scholars who have explored in past centuries. In the memory of native literatures alone will a genuine and lasting originality remain.

Cosmopolitanism and internationalism will inevitably become the life of the modern mind, and the social function will be impelled to change its nature. As Brunetière has said, instead of maintaining the traditions which divide because they are only born of the necessity of taking an opposite view in order to assume any position at all, literature will only take from each and will only retain the best, the most original, and the purest elements, in order to weld them into a great universal whole.

Many notable differences, indications of race, remnants of a picturesque past will be effaced in this amalgamation, and will henceforth only belong to history. But what will remain intangible amidst the general progress of things, of mankind, and of ideas is the privilege in which all true genius will be united, namely, art and literature, that impersonal and general sense by which they are identified with their own epoch, their native country and the entire world without revealing in themselves a very marked personality.

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